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ALICE GOLDBURG.

I MAY as well begin by saying, that the bump of inquisitiveness on my head—acquisitiveness I believe is the proper word, and sounds better too—is really something “pro-di-gi-ous.” This is quite enough introduction to all I am going to tell, because had not that bump been preternaturally large, I should have remained in happy ignorance of what these pages will contain. Please then to compliment me on my candour, in owning to a bump supposed to be confined to the female head, and if you like, accompany me on my

FIRST JOURNEY.

Now, this first journey was not prompted by curiosity, but business. I remember that when I got into the railway carriage, I felt extremely cross, for I did not like the object for which I was travelling. There

were various packages in the carriage, which militated against the comfort of my legs, and this, though on the principle of counter-irritation, gave no perceptible alleviation to my mind. I am afraid I was scowling about me in a way not to increase my good looks—if I have any—when I perceived that what I had imagined to be a bundle of wrappers in a corner seat, was surmounted by a little pale face and pair of spectacles. I could not tell whether the eyes behind them looked at me, but I had an uncomfortable feeling that they did, and that what they saw, made a small mouth have an unmistakable expression of contempt. I am not nervous—I don't think curious people are; so I did not start when I was diverted from the contemplation of my fellow-traveller by a sharp voice uttering close at my ear, "Bradshaw, my dear." "My dear" just roused herself sufficiently to reach the book, and collapsed again. The gentleman who took it from her, looked into my corner with such a pair of eyes, as would have made a nervous person bound out of the carriage on the spot. I felt quite certain that whatever he might be now, he must once have been deranged, for I could see the white all round the iris of his eye. Just as the train was about to start, this personage made his way over the parcels at my feet, and threw himself into the seat opposite the young lady, but the next moment he was on his legs again.

“ What’s the trouble now, uncle ? ” said the most languid voice I ever heard.

“ I can inquire at the next station,” he muttered to himself, thrusting his head out of the window. His niece certainly smiled as she turned away her head. He did not explain what he wanted to know, and his words sounded as if they had reference to her question. Presently she took off her spectacles, and leant her pretty small head comfortably against the corner, still further crushing that smart, but tumbled little bonnet she wore.

“ You don’t seem to be enjoying yourself this morning, love,” remarked her uncle.

“ I have taken off my spectacles, because I want to nap,” she answered.

There seemed to be a sort of connection between enjoyment and spectacles, which I was at a loss to discover.

“ I wish *I* could nap,” said the uncle wearily, burrowing his head in his corner, and, to my great relief, closing fast his eyes. I am one of those unfortunate people who can *not* sleep in a railway carriage, so I never attempt going through the mere form of a nap, because I am perfectly sure I could not keep my eyes closed long enough to deceive my fellow-travellers. Whether that girl was doing this or not, she *looked* the picture of calm repose, and was left perfectly undisturbed by

her uncle, although he continued during the whole of the journey as wide awake as myself. He was a very thin man, nervously restive in all his movements. His dress was of good materials, but I am sorry to say, told somewhat against his pretty niece, for his coat was sadly deficient in buttons ; indeed, I fear there was but one of any use, and there were holes in his gloves. The rim of his coat-sleeves round the wrist, had a whity appearance, which looked chronic and not accidental, as the loss of a button or two might be. Altogether, that coat combined with the “take it easy” expression of his niece’s face. Much to my satisfaction, however, I remembered she wore spectacles, and I was almost glad to think there must be some imperfection in her soft hazel eyes, that prevented her from seeing the need her uncle had of a needle and thread ; if so, how could she be expected to keep his outer man in irreproachable order ? I have a weakness for pretty faces, but I never go beyond admiration ; love was among my unknown sensations at the time I speak of ; indeed, curiosity always got the better of every other feeling with me. Odious as I shall be thought, the direction on the gentleman’s hat-box was an equal, if not superior, attraction to that charming little face. I got an opportunity of reading it when the train stopped, for he left it on the seat beside me—“Mr. Goldburg.” Nothing more ! Where were they going ? Whence

had they come? My bump seemed quite to ache, but I suppose I only fancied it did. Miss Goldburg (I imagined she bore the same name as her uncle, but I could not feel satisfied even on that point) leisurely roused herself and replaced a wrapper that had slipped from her knees. She then looked out of the window, feeling about the while with one small hand, which was but half thrust, I noticed, in a buttonless glove. At length it came out of a corner with a much-worn leather case, and from it she took her spectacles, for the purpose, it seemed, of watching her uncle's movements, as he went impetuously along the platform. But even to look out of the window for more than a few seconds, appeared too much for her, as she relapsed into her old comfortable attitude, and took no notice of the peremptory demand for tickets; so I had to explain that the gentleman had her ticket, which was a mere guess on my part, but it proved a correct one. Mr. Goldburg strode back again, and I was delighted to hear him inform his companion that they must go on to the place I was bound for. "Really," was the only notice she took of the communication.

"Well, dear, do you feel better now?"

"Yes. It is very cold."

He threw another shawl on the heap upon her, and they both remained silent till we stopped again. But

she retained her spectacles, though she did not converse ; so I supposed her dozing abilities were exhausted. I was the first to get out when we reached our destination, and, much to my annoyance, found myself instantly greeted by an acquaintance (friend he called himself), who dragged me away to transact business at once : so the last I saw of my fellow-travellers was in the midst of their luggage, Miss Goldburg being disengaged from her wrappers. Some hours had passed, when my business concluded ; I walked up a street in search of something in the shape of food : I was on the point of entering a pastrycook's, but I changed my mind, as I descried my pale fellow-traveller striding into a gunsmith's opposite. I strolled along, keeping an eye on the shop, and in about a quarter of an hour he came out, pulling his coat as close together as the one button would permit.

I walked as close after him as I could. My curiosity about him and his niece had really almost expired, and I firmly believe it would have done so entirely, but for this sudden sight of him ; thus aroused, I determined to attempt its gratification. He led me quite out of the town, and I know not how many miles from it. The country was so bare, ugly, and deserted, that the walk was anything but a pleasant one. Though it was summer, twilight had come on when we reached a long avenue, starting, as it were, in the most sudden

and striking manner, from the barren ground: I dare say if I had been an imaginative person, I should have fancied it the work of a magician in the shape of Mr. Goldburg, who was dimly visible under the over-arching trees.

As I have already said, I am not nervous, it is hardly necessary to say I am not romantic, and therefore I plodded on, and thought of nothing but gratifying my insatiable bump. I had lost sight of Mr. Goldburg, and so quickened my steps until I emerged on an open space in front of a large mansion, apparently newly built; here I beheld him again, and cautiously slackened my speed. I had soft turf under my feet now, for we were walking over a well-kept lawn; then we came upon a terraced garden, with steps and balustrades, in beautiful order. Here I was almost put to flight, by the sudden, though slight, disturbance of this languidly intoned exclamation:—

“Look here, uncle!”

There she was, sitting on a step. Fortunately for me there were some shrubs at hand to hide me.

“What is it, dear?” said Mr. Goldburg’s voice.

“I said, look how exactly everything is as mamma described it.”

“Yes, I suppose it is.”

“ Why this must be the very flight of steps she was so fond of, as a little girl. I don’t see any violets near though: do you?”

“ We can’t see now. Come in, you have not been all over the house yet.”

“ No; will he let us go over it?”

“ To be sure; come, come.”

And they went. She took his arm, and he adapted his pace to hers, in an impatient kind of way, as if he longed to fall into his own, and drag her on. Looking out from my screen, I beheld a comfortable-looking house, much smaller than the first we had passed, but also much older. I saw uncle and niece enter the door, and I saw it close upon them; and what was I to do next? I wandered about a bit, considering; of course taking care to keep out of sight of the house. The result of my meditations was a bold advance to the door, and a knock thereon; a neat little maid answered the summons.

“ I have been informed that the house below is to let. Is it true?”

“ Eh? What did you say, sir?” with a stare of astonishment.

“ Perhaps I have mistaken the house: there is no name up,” I said, glancing over the front of the building.

“ Name! Everybody knows Cote Hall! Mr. Cote

don't let houses!" and the door was banged in my face.

"Cote of that Ilk, then," thought I; and, very much puzzled, I stared about me, quite baffled in my researches for the present; it then occurred to me that to linger any more might be imprudent, so I set off at a good pace, and after losing my way more than once, I reached the town where I had passed the day, and, more out of temper than ever, made my way to the station just in time for a midnight train to take me home.

SECOND JOURNEY.

THIS was undertaken out of pure curiosity. I had nothing particular to do, and so I went as far as the train would take me in the direction of Cote Hall. Of course I had made many inquiries regarding the place, but all I could gather was, that Mr. Cote, being a deformed gentleman, kept very close, and saw nobody. His son, however, was a better known person, being a magistrate, and giving occasional dinner parties. The name of "Goldburg" seemed quite unknown. About six o'clock in the evening, I found myself in the avenue leading to Cote Hall, but it was not solitary this time; three men were beating about the hedge in a very excited manner; I was in the act of turning to depart, when they all three rushed forward and seized me. I was quite startled out of all presence of mind by this attack; they seemed to me to be talking in the most incoherent manner, and I could only understand the fierce exultation of their speech to mean, that I was the very person they were in search of. Feeling I had no business where I was,

fear made a coward of me, and I allowed them, without a struggle, to hurry me on to the open space in front of Cote Hall.

Here was more to astonish me: groups of servants and people all on the alert, excitement in every face, doors and windows open, voices and confusion everywhere. The sight of me increased all this tenfold; some pressed upon me, some shrank away; but as I was forced into the house, I felt myself again. The hall was filled with gentlemen, among whom my appearance, created evidently great surprise.

“We found him skulking in the grounds,” my custodians called, out of breath. I was going to speak, but I saw that the tide of attention was divided from me by the opening of a door. “She’s come to,” said a female voice. “She can identify him, perhaps,” was whispered; and every eye again turned upon me. “Wait till the doctor comes,” was spoken a little louder. “She may die first,” came like an echo. After several attempts to see through the gaps made by the movements of the bystanders, I succeeded in catching sight of the door that had been opened, just as Mr. Goldburg came through it. He was instantly surrounded, and the following questions were addressed to him by several voices:—“Shall this man be brought in?” “Can she speak?” “Has she said anything?” “Does she know who it was?” Mr. Goldburg looked

from one to the other of his questioners in his quick, nervous manner, but answered nothing. "This is the man that has been found, Mr. Goldburg," said one tall, gentlemanly person, pressing forward to point me out. Mr. Goldburg's eyes fastened upon me in that peculiarly wide, open way which I did not like; his hand then went up to sweep away the hair from *his forehead, as if that hid some recollective faculty, which he would have just then laid bare.* But at this moment a sudden calm seemed to come over everybody; there had been added another to our number, and he stood alone, for a space imperceptibly made itself, as it were, around him. A deformed man, who might once have been as straight as any one about him; he impressed one with that idea immediately, sad as his aspect now was to look upon. His face was not a sinister one, and yet, though I had perfectly recovered my self-possession, a chilly feeling in my throat, prevented my speaking out as I had intended doing, the moment before I saw him. I could see aversion to every one present in his looks, and it seemed difficult to him to give utterance to this question:—

"Is there a magistrate among you?"

"Yes," answered the gentleman who had pointed me out to Mr. Goldburg. "I am one, and your son here is another."

“I am aware of that, but I did not see my son,” rejoined the deformed.

“We had best both go in, had we not, Mr. Cote?” said he who had announced himself a magistrate, pointing to the open door.

“Certainly,” was the reply.

The magistrate and another, whom I supposed to be *Mr. Cote’s son, advanced to it, and I was pushed on in their rear. When we had entered, I heard the door close behind me, but I was too much absorbed by what I saw to look round even for a second.*

On a sofa lay Miss Goldburg; a tall, thin woman, with prominent nose, eyes, and mouth, stood on one side of her, and a young man on the other. I remember Miss Goldburg had the same black silk dress on, in which I first saw her; I noticed this, because of the vivid manner in which three crimson spots showed on one sleeve, which had a light-green ribbon trimming.

“My love,” said the young man, bending down to her, “try and look round; we think we have got the wretch.”

She gently raised her head as he spoke; her eyes encountered mine with more than their usual languor; then the glance passed on and her eyelids fell. I looked back, and saw Mr. Cote and Mr. Goldburg standing near the door, which was opposite

the couch ; apart from them, with their backs to the window, stood the two magistrates ; the two men who kept guard on me completed the party.

“Alice,” said the young man, “did he do it?” He pointed to me. Instead of the instant negative I had expected, she was quite silent.

“What am I accused of?” I exclaimed, rather indignantly.

“Hush!” was the answer I received from all, except the prominent female, who enlightened me thus :—

“You are accused of shooting her, you wretch!”

“I shoot her!”

“Alice,” repeated the young man, “it was him. Let us have him taken to jail at once,” he said, turning to the magistrates.

“Yes, yes,” answered one of them.

“No,” said a feeble but decided voice, “it was *not* him.”

I felt exceedingly relieved, I must own.

“Then who was it, Alice? Did you *know* the man?”

She looked at the speaker, and whispered :—

“Yes, certainly ; they are not wanted now. She wishes those men removed.”

My custodians very unwillingly released me, and made their exit, most disappointed, I dare say, that I

was not the man. What an awful silence it was for a minute or two ! I had felt afraid they would have sent me away, but I suppose I had not been included in the young lady's mandate, or else they overlooked me. The lover (for such I concluded him to be) spoke again at last :—

“ My dear, dear Alice, I can't bear to tease you, but every moment is precious ; the villain, whoever he may be, will escape us if you don't speak.”

She gave a little gasp, and spoke ; I did not hear what she said ; I do not know whether any one else did beside the lover, who exclaimed, “ Good Heaven !” He put his lips close to her ear ; her eyes opened wider than ever I thought they could, and with the effort of raising her hand to push him away, she exhausted herself, and gave no further signs of life.

“ Alice,” he said quickly and deprecatingly, “ you know he was—.” I strained my ears to hear, but that detestable doctor (though he was wanted certainly) bustled into the room, and turned us all out except the rigid woman, all whose motion was confined to her eyes. When I got outside the door, which I was the last to do, I could not see Mr. Cote anywhere. The crowd had much diminished ; indeed there were very few beside Mr. Goldburg, the lover, who kept guard on the door, and the two magistrates. Mr. Goldburg spoke a few words to Mr. Cote's son, who

responded by gravely bowing his head. I could see a slight likeness to his father in the action, though not in the countenance. He had the largest and whitest forehead I think I ever saw ; I really noticed nothing else about him, except that his eyes looked very much as if they were formed of coal, so black and expressionless did they seem to me. We all stood waiting in silence, until Mr. Cote, jun., walked up to me, and courteously hoped I would not inconvenience myself by staying.

“Indeed, sir,” I replied, “it is no trouble at all ; having been mixed up in this affair, I must stay, and hear what the doctor says of the young lady.”

He bowed again and moved away, much to my satisfaction, for though I had spoken decidedly, I was not without a fear that I might not be allowed to see the end of this adventure. At last the door opened, and the doctor came forth.

“Well ?” said Mr. Goldburg.

“No, not at all well,” answered the doctor crossly ; “you have been agitating her in the most shocking manner, and it is impossible to say what the consequence may be at present.”

“Is she delirious ?” asked Mr. Cote.

“~~Delirious~~ ? no, not yet at any rate. Good morning, good morning.”

"Doctor, doctor," exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, pacing after him.

"What now?" rejoined the doctor, turning like a beast at bay.

"Is she in danger?"

"I have left all directions with the good woman there, and I shall come again before night. Mr. Goldburg, good day;" and the doctor was off past recall.

The lover occupied a good deal of my attention, even while I listened to the above short dialogue. I had expected he would have been one of the first to question the doctor, instead of which he sat still on his chair like one in a trance; but when we were all absorbed in our separate reflections on the medical no-opinion, I saw his eyes, which had been cast down, wandering from face to face in the most piercing manner. There was more than anxiety expressed by *his* face. Several persons had departed after the doctor, and we were now only five in number, Mr. Goldburg, the lover, the two magistrates, and myself. Mr. Cote supposed the woman had carried Miss Goldburg to her bedroom.

"Of course," responded his fellow-magistrate, "and as I can be of no further use, I shall only be in the way. I will call in the morning, Mr. Goldburg. Can I drive you anywhere?" he added, politely turning to me.

"Now, I *must* go," thought I; but I was going to

refuse his offer, when it occurred to me that at least I might gather some information from *him*; so I mentioned the town I had walked from, and he instantly said, "Oh, I am going there myself, so come along." I bowed to Mr. Goldburg, who did not return the compliment; I repeated the honour to the lover, on whom it was quite wasted, so with such discouragement on every side, I thought politeness would be thrown away on Mr. Cote also; but no, he came forward and shook hands with me in the most courteous fashion. My companion had not wasted his time in such formalities, and was therefore awaiting, me poised in his dog-cart, whip in hand, in a very fever to start off. I had scarcely settled myself beside him, indeed I was not half settled all the drive, when we rattled away, and had passed through the avenue before I could look about me. He did not speak a word. This was not to be borne.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I *should* like to know to whom I am obliged for this very pleasant drive."

"Pleasant! I am glad you find it so, sir; my name is Crone."

"Thank you; what a contrast the very pretty place we have just left is, to the surrounding country!" This was to keep up the conversation; I did not care a straw for the "pretty place," or the country just then.

"Yes, very," was the absent reply. Being driven

to extremities, I plunged into what I wanted to discuss.

“ What do you think of this shocking affair, sir ? ”

“ Eh ? ”

“ I say, what do you think of what has taken place at Cote Hall ? ”

“ I think *you* got yourself into a mess, sir ; pray may I ask you what you were doing when the men found you ? ”

“ Only admiring the place, Mr. Crone.”

“ Indeed ! your admiration had like to have cost you dear. But, by-the-way, I am ignorant of *your* name ; perhaps you will inform me.”

“ To be sure, but I think you will be none the wiser, as I am a stranger in your neighbourhood.”

“ Never mind that ; your evidence may be wanted some day.”

“ My name is Lookabout, and I shall always be at your service.”

“ Thank you, and favour me with your address, please.”

I gave him my address, and he stopped driving a moment, to write it down in a small note-book he took from his pocket.

“ Would you have any objection to inform me how this happened, Mr. Crone ? ”

“ How what happened ? ”

"You know what I mean. How came so many people to be assembled at Cote Hall?"

"Mr. Cote gave a dinner party to-day."

"Oh, indeed; but how did Miss Goldburg get shot at?"

"She was not present at dinner of course, as it was a gentleman's party. Some of us left the table early, and Miss Goldburg's intended, said he saw her in the garden, and went to join her. A few minutes after, we heard the report of a pistol, and you know the rest."

"Indeed I don't," thought I, and I cast about in my mind how to elicit more. "Who could possibly have any motive for shooting at Miss Goldburg?" I waited a little bit, but no answer came. "Do you suspect any one, Mr. Crone?"

"I suspected you, Mr. Lookabout, very strongly, and I imagine you did not altogether fancy that suspicion."

"Well, I suppose it was very natural you should suspect me under the circumstances, but I hope you don't think I *look* like an assassin, Mr. Crone?"

"Shall I tell you what I think you look like, Mr. Lookabout?"

"Pray do."

[REDACTED] "You won't be offended?"

[REDACTED] "Oh dear, no."

"Well then, you might sit at this moment for any artist who wanted to personify curiosity."

This ruffled me not a little; I piqued myself on hiding my predominating faculty, under an off-hand address, and to be thus roughly unmasked, was not pleasant to my feelings. "Anyone mixed up in this business must naturally feel an interest in every particular, Mr. Crone."

"Oh, of course; now here we are, you see; where shall I set you down?"

"At the railway station, if you please."

In another five minutes, there we were, and if I had not leapt very briskly from the vehicle, I believe I should have been maimed for life; so short was the space given me for alighting. With barely a nod Mr. Crone dashed off, and left me to endure all the pangs of an unpeased curiosity.

I did not go home that night. I had almost secured a ticket, when it struck me that I ought to stay in the town just a day or two, in case I might be wanted. I took my way to the principal hotel therefore, where I found the event at Cote Hall had already been heard of; but so little was known of the inmates of that place, that the wildest conjectures prevailed, and I felt myself by far the best informed person present. Before I retired to bed, I took care to have a letter posted, addressed to my home, and containing a request that

all letters arriving for me, might be forwarded to the hotel where I was then staying.

I think I never passed a more restless night, but I was up betimes in the morning, and walked about a good deal before breakfast, and I had gained a tolerable appetite for it ; by the time all the necessary articles for that meal had, by gradual and slow degrees, found their way, through a waiter's hands, to my room. The morning was so very fine, and my desire after knowledge so very great, that my stomach was but half-satisfied when I rose to depart for Cote Hall. Of course many people would make inquiries after Miss Goldburg, and why not I amongst them ? I was rather surprised when I had got a mile out of the town, to find the road as lonely as ever. To be sure it was still early, and other inquirers might be more fashionable than myself. Well, much better show ardour than attention to fashion, and so on I went, and saw the place for the first time shining out under the morning sun. It really looked charming, and the beds of flowers smelt perfectly delicious ; but as I did *not* notice very particularly how everything appeared, I will not attempt to describe as if I *did*. I knocked, and knocked again, and having waited a considerable time after that, an indignant and harassed-looking footman opened the door, and stared me in the face, without giving me even the assistance of a "What

d'you want?" for which at that moment I should have been thankful.

"I have called to inquire how Miss Goldburg is this morning."

"Just the same."

"I am sorry. The doctor has not spoken more favourably than he did yesterday, then?"

"No, she's just the same."

"Has anything been discovered?"

"Not as I know of."

"Indeed! then things are much as I left them yesterday?"

"Just the same."

"Hang you, 'just the same,'" I could have shouted, but I restrained myself; and this slight pause in my inquiries gave him an opportunity of shutting the door, which he did not fail to take.

I walked back under a fierce sun, and reached my hotel with a pulse so high, that I think I might have been excused if I had sent for a doctor (of course the one who was in attendance on Miss Goldburg), but I did not. Much as I detest physic, I would have drained a whole bottle, even two if requisite, could the doing so have gained me some information, as a sugar-plum to follow the nauseous ordeal. But I knew better: the inspection of *my* tongue would be followed by no revelation of *his*; so I let the doctor alone, and

determined to quiet my system by a nap after dinner. After much trouble in trying to overpower the dusty smell of the horsehair sofa, by sprinklings of lavender-water, oft repeated, I suppose I fell into this pre-meditated and much-desired nap, for I felt deprived of all my ordinary intelligence, when the door burst open, and a voice gabbled :—

“ Please, sir, telegraph message.”

My bump had gone to sleep most decidedly, for it was certainly more than a minute before I looked at the paper ; then it gradually woke up, I suppose. The message was from Mr. Crone to the address I had given him, and it had been sent on to me. I must go immediately to some place in the town, where a private inquiry was going on into the event of the previous day. Of course, immediately meant as soon as the train could take me, but as I was on the spot, I would show my respect for the message, and go at once. Quite roused, and I hope with all my wits about me, I found my way to the place indicated, and was admitted into a room full of gentlemen. “ Well,” I thought to myself, “ if I had come much later, you would have all been devouring your dinners, instead of sitting here.” My dinner had been an early one. Mr. Crone evidently was the prime mover in the proceedings. He sat at the head of a table in the centre of the room, two or three others were seated

at it, and the rest stood about. Mr. Crone did not seem to see my entrance, and though one or two stared at me, none expressed surprise at seeing me so much sooner than they could possibly have anticipated.

“Well, then, you are *quite* sure, Mr. Goldburg, that no one left the billiard-room while you were in it?” These were the first words I heard Mr. Crone say.

“I *am* quite sure, Mr. Crone,” was the reply.

“Very well, then; now suppose we have the footman in.” The bell was rung, and in a few minutes my friend “Just the same” was ushered in.

“We want you to inform us who you saw on the stairs at Cote Hall after dinner yesterday,” said Mr. Cote, fixing his eyes upon him.

“Yes, sir.” A moment’s pause.

Mr. Crone impatiently, “Well?”

“I saw Mr. Goldburg there go up, and Master and Mr. Forrester.”

“Who do you mean by ‘Master?’”

“My master, sir.”

“Yes, yes, of course; but which master, father or son?”

“Mr. Cecil is master, sir; we never see Mr. Cote.”

“Hem! And were those all you saw?”

“All—every one, sir.”

“Did I not tell you so?” I heard Mr. Goldburg mutter, and there was a flush of anger, I thought, on his sunken cheek.

“You saw these go upstairs?” resumed Mr. Crone.

“Yes, sir, I did.”

“And you never saw them again?”

“Yes, I did see them, at least two of them, but only for a minute.”

“When, and where?” asked Mr. Crone, leaning forward.

“On the top of the stairs, sir; a very little while after they’d gone up.”

“And what were you doing there?”

“Going up with a duster to dust the billiard-table: it hadn’t been opened some time.”

“I wonder you did not do that before, when your master was expecting company.”

“I forgot it.”

“And who were the two you saw?”

“Master and Mr. Forrester.”

“Where were you then, Mr. Goldburg?”

“In the billiard-room, I suppose.”

“But you said *no one* left while you were there.”

“Well, I did not miss either Mr. Cote or the other, and there were several besides them in the room.”

"But how could you say you were *sure* no one went out of the room?"

"I *was* sure at the time you asked. You don't give one a moment to reflect. I remember now that Cecil said he would fetch us cigars, but he was not gone a minute; and I am very certain Mr. Forrester never was in the room *at all*."

I could see Mr. Crone was disgusted with Mr. Goldburg, and preferred questioning the footman.

"Did you dust the billiard-table then?"

"No, sir."

"Why?"

"Because we heard the row directly after I got into the room."

"What row? The report of the pistol, do you mean?"

"No, sir; we never heard *that*, but we heard the servants and people calling out poor Miss Goldburg was murdered."

"And what did you do then?"

"We all dashed down-stairs, sir."

"Hum. And where was Mr. Forrester?"

"I don't know, sir."

"What? you never saw him again, then?"

"No, sir."

"Nor I," said Mr. Crone, meditatively. "Does anybody here know where Mr. Forrester was, in the confusion that followed?"

“Yes, Mr. Crone,” was exclaimed by two voices at once. “He rode off for the doctor.”

“Oh, that was it, was it? And why is he not here to-day?” Nobody appeared to know *that*. “Let him be sent for.” A messenger was despatched at once. “And there is another person who ought to have been here.”

“I know who you mean, Mr. Crone,” said a portly man who sat at the table. “The gentleman who was engaged to Miss Goldburg; but he was so terribly cut up, that I let him off.”

Some of the gentlemen seemed satisfied with this explanation, and some did not, among whom were Mr. Crone and myself.

“I think he ought to be sent for,” said Mr. Crone.

“So do I,” was my unfortunate observation.

“I am glad of it,” said Mr. Crone; “for as you are the least wanted here, perhaps you will have no objection to go for him. He is up at Cote Hall, and you can have a horse immediately.”

“Thank you; but being a stranger, you see, I do not even know his name.”

“Mr. Thorn, that is his name; and as to being a stranger, that does not disqualify you for a messenger.”

I should have made an angry reply, and let him know I was not to be summoned by a magistrate, to be

told I was not wanted, except as a messenger ; but then the ride to Cote Hall, with an ostensible object for knocking at the door ! This was not altogether to be despised. But then Mr. Forrester, whoever he might be, I *must* see him. I was about to decline the errand, when a gentleman said,—“ I think, when we have examined Mr. Forrester, we shall not have much more time—”

“ Before dinner,” put in the portly man ; “ certainly not. Besides, I do think we ought to show a *little* consideration for feelings, and that sort of thing.”

“ Here is Mr. Goldburg, the uncle of the young lady, and *he* has feelings, I suppose,” said one of the dissatisfied party.

“ Yes, very true ; but then a lover, you know, is considered—”

“ To put off a good dinner in this case ! ” interrupted Mr. Crone, sarcastically.

The portly man looked furious, but could not find anything to retort just directly, and in the meantime the messenger despatched for Mr. Forrester appeared alone !

“ He is not at home, sir.”

“ Who ? ” asked Mr. Crone.

“ Mr. Forrester, sir ; but they said they would send for him, and he would be here directly.”

It was plain to see that every one doubted this very much.

“Who is Mr. Forrester?” I asked a gentleman next me.

“Mr. Forrester is an old bachelor, and a friend of Mr. Cecil Cote.”

“Indeed! And does he live near?”

“He lives in the town.”

What misfortune pursued me, that I should always meet with such uncommunicative people.

“Do you think he will come?”

“I can’t say.”

It was no use. I gave him up after that. I saw Mr. Crone whisper to the man who had been sent for Mr. Forrester, who instantly left the room.

“Why is not Mr. Cote here?” I asked, edging towards the portly man, who I thought might like to vent his subsiding wrath in a few words.

“He *was* here not long ago,” answered he; “but Mr. Crone thinks himself so vastly clever, as to want no assistance from a fellow-magistrate.”

The sneer with which he said this delighted my heart, for it showed me a way into his confidence.

“Well, I must say, I wonder at Mr. Crone liking to take the whole responsibility of this investigation upon himself. It seems conceited, to say the least of it.”

“ And so he is. I tell you he is the most conceited man on the bench.”

He said this so emphatically, that I was almost afraid Mr. Crone must have heard, notwithstanding he was occupied in conversation.

“ Mr. Cote is a much cleverer man.”

“ Is he, indeed ; just as I thought, judging from his appearance,” I replied.

“ Yes ; and I wish he had insisted on remaining here.”

“ What made him leave ? ”

“ Some county business, which either he or Mr. Crone must have attended to.”

“ Oh, indeed ! and you don’t think he will return ? ”

“ Oh dear, no ; he can’t you see, there wouldn’t be time.”

“ Ah ! ”

“ Look there, Mr. Forrester *is* come at last.”

I was vexed not to have seen his entrance, and determined to talk no more, but listen. Mr. Forrester was a long, stiff man, with a long, stiff face, and he looked most unpromisingly rigid, as he bowed generally to all.

“ Well, Mr. Forrester, I am glad to see you,” said Mr. Crone. “ Sit down, please.”

Mr. Forrester, nothing moved by this magisterial politeness, said he preferred to stand. I thought

Mr. Crone, for the first time, looked a little at a loss how to commence his examination.

“ I—that is we—would be obliged by your informing us what you know of this sad affair.”

“ Yesterday’s affair, I suppose.”

“ Exactly.”

“ I know nothing more than you do, perhaps not so much.”

“ Well, but I should like you to *state* what you do know.”

“ Very well. I know that Miss Goldburg was carried into the house apparently dead, and that I went for the doctor.”

“ How came you to go for the doctor ? ”

“ Because I possess presence of mind.”

“ Why did you not return *with* the doctor ? ”

“ Because my horse would not carry both.”

“ You might have got another.”

“ Perhaps so ; but my health is delicate, and unequal to hard riding.”

Here Mr. Crone thought fit to go off on a different scent.

“ Did you go into the billiard-room after dinner yesterday ! ”

“ No, I did not.”

“ Where were you ? ”

“ Pacing the gallery at the top of the stairs.”

“ Mr. Cecil Cote being with you ?”

“ No, he only joined me for a moment.”

“ Did any conversation pass between you ?”

“ He offered me a cigar, and I refused it.”

“ And that was all ?”

“ That was all.”

All this was very tiresome, I thought ; nothing more seemed likely to be elicited, though Mr. Crone drew the glove, which he held in one hand, slowly through the other several times, as though meditating a fresh attack. But wheels were heard to roll outside, and come to a sudden stop, and Mr. Crone’s meditations simultaneously stopped too. He looked earnestly at the door, which presently opened, and Mr. Thorn walked in. He had a disturbed and haggard look, partly owing, perhaps, to the disordered state of his fair hair. He spoke rather indistinctly, but I could hear him say,—“ I met a man you sent for me, Mr. Crone. I was coming into the town.”

“ Coming here, were you ?”

“ Yes—no, for the doctor.”

“ I hope Miss Goldburg is not worse ?”

“ Yes, I am afraid she is—that is, the nurse thinks so.”

“ Delirious, I suppose ?”

“ No, oh no, she is not at all delirious.”

“ I am glad to hear that, for we must try to

elicit something from her, as soon as the doctor gives leave."

"It would kill her in her present state," said Mr. Thorn, eagerly.

"She knows who it was, I believe."

"Do you? I am not aware that she said so."

"No, certainly not," said Mr. Goldburg.

"Mr. Thorn asked her, if you remember."

"Yes, we all thought he succeeded in gaining an answer. Was not that the general impression, gentlemen?"

"We were none of us present, Mr. Crone, so we can't say," answered the portly man, making himself spokesman.

"Very true. Let me see, there were present the two Mr. Cotes, Mr. Goldburg, and—"

Mr. Crone paused—I stepped forward—"And myself, Mr. Crone."

"Ay, I don't know how *you* came to be allowed to remain in the room; but, however, it will not be amiss to make use of that oversight. What was your impression, then?"

"That Miss Goldburg told Mr. Thorn who shot at her."

Mr. Crone nodded approvingly at me.

"I assure you, Mr. Crone, she did not tell me," exclaimed Mr. Thorn.

“ What made you exclaim in the manner you did, then ?”

“ Did I ? I am not aware of having done so ;” and Mr. Thorn increased his wild appearance, by still more entangling his hair with his hand.

“ If you will inform us what caused that exclamation, we shall be satisfied. Mr. Thorn.”

“ I cannot.”

“ But you *must*,” said Mr. Crone, severely.

“ You cannot make me break an oath, Mr. Crone.”

Mr. Crone looked very hard at him.

“ Do you mean that Miss Goldburg has made you take an oath not to say who it was ?”

“ I have said she never told who it was, and I repeat it now.”

I saw Mr. Forrester slowly making for the door.

“ Please not to go yet, Mr. Forrester,” called out Mr. Crone.

Mr. Forrester paused.

“ Now, Mr. Thorn, this is most extraordinary of you ; we shall be forced to examine the young lady, if you will not speak.”

“ That is impossible—at least at present.”

“ What is impossible ? For you to speak, or that Miss Goldburg should be examined.”

“ Both.”

“ We shall see.”

“Mr. Crone.”

“Well.”

“If—if Miss Goldburg—dies—” his voice dropped so low I could scarcely hear him.

“What then?”

“Then I will speak.”

“But if she recovers?”

“I cannot.”

Everybody looked at everybody, except Mr. Forrester and Mr. Goldburg, both of whom kept their eyes fixed on vacancy. The portly man was the first to speak.

“Really it is *very* hot—I don’t see that we are wanted;” he added to his neighbour—“suppose we go?”

“With all my heart,” replied the other, starting up with alacrity.

Mr. Crone not attempting to stay their departure, they went, and Mr. Forrester followed them. Several others presently did the same.

“Well,” I thought, “they must have a dead level in the region of acquisitiveness to leave at this stage.”

I wondered why Mr. Crone was so silent, and what he would do next. All of a sudden he turned to Mr. Goldburg—

“Would you like to ask the young man any questions?”

“No,” was Mr. Goldburg’s reply.

“You think it is of no use?”

“If he is bound by an oath, I think it wrong to press him further.”

“You do?”

“I do.”

“And you will not have your niece questioned?”

“No.”

“Then you must bear the consequences, if any further mischief takes place before I can resume this inquiry, which I am determined to do.”

“It is to be hoped with better success,” said Mr. Goldburg, bowing himself out.

Mr. Thorn rushed after him. Mr. Crone rose, looking in nowise fatigued by his exertions.

“Mr. Lookabout,” he said, “I don’t think I have quite done with you, but for the present you may go home again”

Gracious permission! I had a strong inclination to knock off the hat he placed upon his head as he gave it. I let him go off without even a word, however, for if I offended him, I might lose the chance of seeing the end of this complicated business.

THIRD JOURNEY.

I RETURNED to my hotel, but before the day was over sallied forth again in search of a lodging, which I very easily obtained, as single gentlemen seemed to be in request. I had fully made up my mind to take up my abode in the town for awhile, and so I settled myself in my parlour, as comfortably as my uneasiness of mind would let me. A certain circumstance had been thrusting itself into my mind, all through the day's proceedings. If Mr. Crone had not been so cool, not to say uncivil, I don't know but what I might have confided to him this same circumstance ; and now I was inexpressibly doubtful and troubled, as to whether I ought to speak of it or not. Had Mr. Crone any suspicion of Mr. Goldburg ? If he had, my speaking might increase it ; if he had not, it would be shocking to be the first to suggest such a suspicion to his mind. The weight upon *my* mind was the having seen Mr. Goldburg enter, and leave a gunsmith's shop, the day I followed him to Cote Hall ; and a very unpleasant weight it was. I had not been able to find out whether there was any relationship between the Goldburgs and

Cotes ; no one knew, or at least would tell me, why the Goldburgs were staying at Cote Hall. I longed for the morning, that I might go and make inquiries after Miss Goldburg again. Even should I encounter "just the same," it would be better than staying altogether away from the place. I went to bed, and dreamt, of course a strange jumble, of the people who were so much in my thoughts. I woke up, but soon dropped asleep again, and this time had a most vivid dream. After much trouble, it seemed to me I had persuaded the maid-servant at Cote Hall, to tell her master I must see him ; she came back with a denial, upon which I flew into a furious passion, and called him an inhospitable wretch. The maid went away again, and returned with an invitation for me to walk upstairs. This quite sobered me, and I followed her up, and into a room, where she left me. I had hardly time to look round me, before the deformed man entered, and accosted me with these words, spoken in a low, slow tone, that made me creep all over :—" You called me an inhospitable wretch, that is a term I cannot suffer." As he ended, he held out his hand as if to shake mine, but I felt most reluctant to give it him ; however, fearing to offend, I slowly extended it, and while doing so, perceived that his other arm was terminated by a *club hand* ! As my hand lay in his, I felt it, and saw it rapidly contract and become a

shapeless lump. "You *would* see me," he said, dropping it, and speaking in a still more unnatural voice ; "you knew I never see any one, but I do not mind seeing you, for you are as wretched an object as myself." I woke up, and the dream so impressed my senses, that for some moments I could do nothing but extend, and feel my right hand to ascertain if it was all right. As soon as my landlady (who was an old maid, and very fidgetty) had settled what dinner I was to have, to her satisfaction and not mine, I started for Cote Hall, and I had not gone very far, when I met the doctor's carriage. I immediately hailed it, but without any result ; the coachman pretended not to see, and the doctor looked perfectly unconscious. I met no one else I knew, until I reached the avenue, where I beheld Mr. Crone coming towards me.

"Oh, Mr. Lookabout, you here, eh ? Good morning."

"Good morning ; have you heard how Miss Goldburg is ?"

"Yes, very little hope, I hear. Were you going to inquire ?"

"Yes."

"Ah, well, I have saved you the trouble ; you will turn with me, of course."

"Well—I should like to inquire personally—for—for politeness sake, you know, Mr. Crone."

“Are you a friend of the family, then?”

“No! Oh dear no! but as this affair has introduced me, as it were, to Mr. Goldburg, I think etiquette requires—”

“That you should try to satisfy your curiosity. But I can tell you, *you* will never gain an entrance into that house again.”

“Why not?”

“Because I have failed myself. I have been there this morning for the purpose of obtaining an interview with Mr. Cote, sen., and he declines to see me. We ought to have examined him; it was folly not to do so. Nothing but legal measures will answer, though, I fear.”

“I must say, Mr. Crone, I have felt surprised that Mr. Cote, sen., should have been asked no questions; he has not even been alluded to, in fact.”

“Why, you see we can hardly realize the fact of his existence, I suppose, for none of us had seen him, before he appeared among us so suddenly that day.”

“But you *will* examine him, won’t you?”

“I’ll tell you in good time, depend on it, Mr. Look-about,” he said, with that disagreeable mocking laugh he had. *

“It’s of no consequence whether you do or not, Mr. Crone; good morning:” and I walked on. What was my delight to have the door opened by the rigid

female who I imagined must be Miss Goldburg's nurse !

“ How is Miss Goldburg ? ” I asked, in the most insinuating tone I could command.

“ Scarcely better, and scarcely worse.” Here was a pretty answer !

“ It beats ‘ just the same,’ ” I thought, and became quite powerless to contend with her.

“ Could I see Mr. Goldburg for a minute ? ” I really don’t know why I asked this ; I had no object in fact, for I felt certain of being refused.

“ See Mr. Goldburg,” she repeated thoughtfully, and then sharply inquired, “ What do you want ? ”

Now, much as I might have been obliged for such a question on a previous occasion, it came now, like most other desired things, when it was not wanted.

“ Why—hem—I want to *speak* to Mr. Goldburg.”

“ You can leave a message, perhaps ? ”

“ No, I think not ; I should be *very* much obliged if you would show me in.”

“ Well, I’ll just ask Mr. Goldburg if he would like to see you.”

“ Pray do.” A sudden idea entered my head,—“ And tell him I have something important to communicate.” She went away, shutting the door upon me, lest I should force an entrance into the house. It was not very long I was left to wait.

“Walk in.” I obeyed instantly, and she ushered me into the same room I had been in before. I seated myself on the very couch where Miss Goldburg had lain, and awaited in calmness what Mr. Goldburg might say when he came. Soon I heard his short, quick step across the hall; the door sprang open, and there he was before me.

“I beg pardon for disturbing you, Mr. Goldburg, but I think I have something to say which will excuse my intrusion.”

“Say it, then, please.”

Brought to the point at once; well, I was prepared.

“I suppose you are aware of Mr. Crone’s visit this morning?”

“Yes, yes, I know.”

“You know its object?”

“It is easily guessed.”

“He intends to have the aid of the superintendent of police.”

“You don’t say so!” exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, the whites of his eyes appearing horribly. I really did not expect my speech to take such effect; it was not quite an invention of mine, for I chose so to interpret the “legal measures” Mr. Crone had spoken of.

“I thought you might like to be prepared for this. Of course you will be glad to have the criminal traced; but it is pleasant to know what is doing, especially

as Mr. Crone is so exceedingly prompt in his actions."

"My niece would not like it, and she is the person most concerned, I should think. I know she would like the matter dropped."

"To avoid publicity, I suppose?"

"Yes. It is not pleasant for a young lady to be brought forward and examined, and all that sort of thing, and to no purpose either."

"You don't think she knows who it was?"

"She would have said so if she did."

"Yes, one would think so. She could have no motive for concealment."

"Motive, sir!" he repeated, rather angrily; then, in a calmer tone, "of course not. If she knew she would say; and as she does not, it is useless to have her plagued by any meddling magistrate."

I did not exactly know what I had best answer to this, so I said,—"But Mr. Thorn seems to know something, sir."

"Mr. Thorn is a fool."

"Mr. Crone intends to examine him again."

Mr. Goldburg's thin lips stretched into a smile, he seemed about to say something, but checked himself, and abruptly asked if I had anything more to tell him.

"You know that Mr. Crone wants to see Mr. Cote?"

“ Yes, yes ; he was here this morning on that fool’s errand. Really, it is beyond credibility. How *should* Mr. Cote know anything, secluded as he always is ? ”

“ It would be very disagreeable to him to be summoned.”

“ Summoned ! Quite out of the question, I assure you. Pray tell Mr. Crone so.”

“ I will do my best to prevent it.”

“ Thank you ; and now, good day.”

He looked preoccupied and anxious to be left alone, so I departed, having to let myself out of the house, as no servant appeared. I ruminated all the way home on the interview. I wished to oblige Mr. Goldburg, and yet I was glad I had no influence with Mr. Crone, to prevent the examination of Mr. Cote, for I was dying to see the deformed man again, and hear what he would say.

The next two days were very tedious to me : to repeat my inquiries at Cote Hall might give offence, as, judging by the way in which I had been hitherto answered, anxiety for Miss Goldburg’s welfare, was not acceptable to her friends. But were they friends ? Who was to tell that ? I doubted everybody in the house, not excepting the prominent-featured nurse, though she had not exactly a forbidding face, but next door to it. On the third day, feeling thoroughly bored in my close parlour, I only waited for the cool

twilight to walk in the direction of the place where my thoughts had fixed themselves, and see what there was to see. I passed the railway station on my way, and casually looked in at the door. I saw a gentleman pass the door leading to the platform ; I only caught his side face, but I recognized Mr. Goldburg. A train was on the point of starting, for the bell rang vigorously. I went in, but it was too late to take a ticket ; I rushed on to the platform ; the train was moving : Mr. Goldburg's head at one of the windows showed me where to look ; he was scanning the platform ; beyond him I saw a figure lying full-length on the seat, and a-top of the carriage a white label bore, in black letters, the name of a seaside town. The hurry of mind and eyes while taking in all this, was extreme, and did not subside directly. I stared at everything and everybody, but discovered nothing more to add to what I had already seen. Instead of going to Cote Hall, I retraced my steps home, and pondered whether I should keep my own council, or call on Mr. Crone. At last I determined to sleep on it, which I did. The consequence was, I said nothing to anybody, but went to Cote Hall early in the morning. The house looked as it had ever done ; no sign was there that any of the inmates had left, but I knocked, and knocked in vain ; no admittance this morning. This being the case, I walked over the

garden, and surveyed the house from every point of view, but saw nothing moving at any of the black windows. Being rather tired of this, I walked down the avenue again, and there I heard the first sound of life that had greeted my ears about the place: it was the trot of a horse, which soon came in sight, and the rider was Mr. Cecil Cote. He looked at me very hard, and restrained his steed a little: I bowed, and should have passed on, being rather embarrassed by his observation; he stopped, however, and smiled.

“I suppose you have been inquiring after Miss Goldburg?”

“Such was my intention, but your servants are late this morning.”

“Very likely; your politeness is not thrown away, however. If you will favour me with your card, I will present it to Miss Goldburg with pleasure.”

“Thank you; I don’t happen to have a card, but I hope Miss Goldburg is better.”

“Oh yes, she is better,” he answered; “our anxiety is, or will be soon, at rest, if she continues to improve as she has done this last day or two.”

“I am very glad to hear it indeed; it would have been a shock to so many people if she had died.”

“Oh, don’t speak of such a thing! We could not have borne it.” He spoke with great feeling.

“Do you know if Mr. Crone has been doing anything more?”

“Oh, yes, he is very busy; much interested, as we all are.”

“I hope he will be successful.”

“So do I, indeed.”

“Are you not in fear another attempt may be made on her life?”

He quite started at my suggestion.

“I never thought of that. But we shall never bear to have her out of our sight.”

“She was within sight of her lover when it occurred, I believe?”

“Yes, she was, and *that* did not prevent it, certainly.” He looked not at me, but at his horse’s head, and stroked the mane.

“Good gracious!” I exclaimed to myself; “what does he suspect?” I can’t tell *why* I thought he had any suspicion, but such was the question I asked myself.

“Well, I won’t keep you standing, Mr. —. I have not the pleasure of knowing your name.”

“Lookabout is my name, and if I can be of any use, I shall be happy.”

“Thank you, thank you very much; I shall tell Miss Goldburg of your kind inquiries. Good morning.”

He switched his horse, and went at an exhi-

lirating canter up to his house. I stood looking after him till he was quite out of sight, and then I walked, through a heavy shower, back to my lodgings, and being completely drenched through, I had no fancy to go out again just directly. I had a good many letters to answer after I had dined, so that it was rather late in the evening, when I strolled out to see if anything was stirring in the town. At the door of the hotel where I had first staid, I saw Mr. Crone and the doctor, standing in conversation. Mr. Crone caught sight of me in a moment, and came up, looking very much put out.

“I was just inquiring after you. Where have you been?”

“Nowhere in particular, Mr. Crone. Why do you ask?”

“Because, as you are so polite, you cannot fail to have continued your inquiries at Cote Hall.”

“And if I have, Mr. Crone?”

“You will be able to inform me of the result.”

I was very much tempted to boast of having gained an entrance into the house, when he had failed, but as I fancied Mr. Goldburg’s departure, was partly owing to the information he had obtained from me, I thought it best to be silent on the subject.

“I am sure Mr. Crone cannot be in want of my assistance.”

“Who said I wanted your assistance?”

He spoke very sharply, but I rather enjoyed his evident perturbation.

“You certainly want something from me, Mr. Crone, or you would not do me the honour of searching me out.”

“Well, the fact is, Mr. Lookabout, that the doctor there—oh! he is gone—well, never mind, the doctor has been telling me, that when he went this morning to see Miss Goldburg, he was refused admittance.”

“Well, I hear she is so much better, that perhaps she can dispense with his services.”

“Better! Is she better? How do you know?”

“I had that news from Mr. Cecil Cote this morning.”

“This morning! He was with me this morning, and he did not say a word about her, bad or good.”

“Perhaps you did not ask him?”

“Well, no, I don’t think I did, for I had heard of her from the doctor only the afternoon before, and *his* report was far from favourable.”

“Well, I am inclined to think there must have been a sudden amelioration, for she is”—I paused here.

“What is she? Come, Mr. Lookabout, if you know anything about her, speak out.”

“ So I will, on one condition.”

“ What’s that ? ”

“ That I go with you, where you will go, when I have spoken out.”

“ You mean to Cote Hall ? ”

“ No, I don’t.”

“ Well, don’t be mysterious any longer, and you shall go to Jericho with me, if you fancy the journey.”

“ It’s a promise then ? ”

“ Yes, yes ; make haste.”

“ Well, then, Miss Goldburg is gone with her uncle to Dover.”

“ Nonsense ! Now you *are* drawing the long-bow, and I have no time to waste.”

“ I can only say that I saw them go off last evening.”

“ Where ? ”

“ To Dover.”

“ Yes, but where did you see them ? ”

“ At the railway station, of course.”

“ But it is impossible. They could not have taken her from her bed to a railway carriage. You must have been mistaken.”

“ No, I was not mistaken, I assure you.”

“ Let us go to the station and make inquiries.”

“ With all my heart.”

Away we went, and after much refreshing of their

memory, some of the porters recollected an invalid lady having been carried in, the previous evening, by a tall, thin gentleman, just before the train started for Dover. Mr. Crone being at last convinced of the correctness of my information, accompanied me to my lodgings, and promised to call the next morning.

“Remember your promise, Mr. Crone, and do nothing without me.”

“You may feel easy on that point, Mr. Lookabout, for I have an idea you may be useful to me.”

With this, I was obliged to be content, and wait patiently till morning. I must do Mr. Crone justice to say, that he did not keep me long in suspense. I had scarcely finished my breakfast, when I saw him pass the window, and a brisk knocking immediately followed.

“Well, Mr. Lookabout, here I am, you see. I have decided to go.”

“Have you; when?”

“Now; the train starts in half-an-hour. Can you be ready?”

“Oh dear, yes.”

“The doctor says this journey will be the death of Miss Goldburg.”

“Does he? I hope not.”

“So do I, poor girl. Now let us be off.”

On our way to the station, he told me that though he had seen Mr. Cecil Cote, he had not given him the least idea that he knew of Miss Goldburg's departure.

"I cannot think what could have made Mr. Goldburg take this sudden step, at the risk of his niece's life."

I was very glad we had entered the station as Mr. Crone made this observation, and that no reply was needed. When we had fairly started, Mr. Crone pulled a bundle of letters out of his pocket, and began to tear one up into minute pieces, which he tossed out of the window. I could not help watching him, and wondering what the letter might contain.

"You are very much interested in my letters, are you not, Mr. Lookabout?"

"You seem to have a great many there."

"Yes, and they are all anonymous."

"Indeed, how very odd!"

"Not at all odd; tattle and mischief are of indigenous growth everywhere, you know."

"May I ask what they are about?"

"You might easily guess; about Miss Goldburg principally."

"And shall you destroy them all?"

"Yes, unless you particularly desire these two to

be preserved, in which you are accused of having murdered Miss Goldburg."

"Me!"

"Yes, you, Mr. Lookabout. You are said to have been prowling about the place, ever since the Goldburgs arrived there."

"What exaggeration, to be sure!"

"Is it? You have been up there pretty often, though."

"But what motive can they possibly assign, as an inducement to such a diabolical act?"

"Motive? That is precisely what we cannot find out. If a motive could be found, the rest would be easy."

"Miss Goldburg cannot have any enemies."

"One would think not," answered Mr. Crone, going on with his work of destruction.

"Shall I keep these two interesting letters, then?"

"I should like just to look at them, Mr. Crone, if you please."

"And that is just what I cannot allow. Either I keep them to use against you, or destroy them at once; make your choice."

Not knowing but what the disagreeable man might really preserve them, I thought it best to be on the safe side; but I protested against a man not being allowed to see what concerned him.

“Yes, but you are to remember, Mr. Lookabout, that all these letters are addressed to me, strictly in confidence.”

As he would not satisfy me on this point, I tried another.

“Do you know if the Goldburgs are related to the Cotes, Mr. Crone?”

“I don’t know anything about the Goldburgs. The first time I saw Mr. Goldburg, was at that ill-starred dinner-party.”

“And Miss Goldburg, had you never seen her till that day?”

“No, never.”

Here I turned over in my mind, whether I should mention my having travelled with the Goldburgs in the train, but fearing the question, that might follow, I decided to say nothing about it.

“But the Cotes, you must know them very well, at least Mr. Cecil.”

“Oh yes, I know him very well, but they have not been very many years in our neighbourhood.”

“Haven’t they? And Mr. Thorn, do you know much of him?”

“No, not much. He has but lately come into his property. He came from India last year, to take possession on his father’s death.”

“How came he to be engaged to Miss Goldburg, do you know?”

“Yes, Mr. Lookabout, I can satisfy you even on that point. He met Miss Goldburg somewhere in India, and has been expecting her to arrive with her uncle, this last six months.”

“Oh, she comes from India, then?”

“Yes; and if you feel more comfortable in your mind from having ascertained that, and everything else I have told you, allow me to congratulate you.”

Of course after this, the conversation flagged, but when we reached Dover, I could not help asking how he should manage to find out the Goldburgs.

“Oh, I have thought of that. They are sure to be at one of the hotels; and most likely Miss Goldburg will be too ill to cross the channel for some time.”

“And you propose to inquire for them at the hotels?”

“Yes; and I have no doubt of being successful. I don’t like this smuggling away of the young lady, at all. Cecil ought not to have allowed it.”

The first hotel where we applied did not contain them. Mr. Crone, nothing daunted, merely remarked, “Well, I should have thought that, the most likely place to find them in,” and walked on to another.

“My friend, Mr. Goldburg, is here, is he not?” inquired he of a waiter.

“Mr. Goldburg, sir? He is not in, I believe.”

“Coming back soon, I suppose? Miss Goldburg will receive us, if you will show us the way to her sitting-room.”

“Miss Goldburg is ill, sir.”

“Yes, yes, I know; but not confined to her bed?”

“No, I believe she is up, sir.”

“Well, then take us to her at once, please.”

Mr. Crone, magistrate as he was, used a little bribery here, and consequently we were shown to Miss Goldburg’s sitting-room. Before opening the door, our purchased friend asked what name he should say, but Mr. Crone told him the young lady’s nerves had better be spared the ceremony of an announcement, so he merely opened the door, and we walked in. I felt some compunction for intruding on the young lady in this way, but it did not seem to be shared by Mr. Crone. She lay on a couch near the window, wrapped up in shawls, and apparently asleep. I looked at Mr. Crone, and he looked at me; then he let the door go from his hand at its own swinging will, and the window being open, a bang, which appeared to me most fearful under the circumstances, ensued. Whether Mr. Crone felt my look as a reproach, I don’t know, but he whispered, “You know it is all for her good.”

“The waiter will not think it very consistent with the anxiety expressed for her nerves,” I retorted.

To my utter surprise, Miss Goldburg had not started, but only raised her eyelids, and was now calmly regarding us. Mr. Crone looked a little embarrassed, and I felt most dreadfully so.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Goldburg, I believe I must introduce myself, for I dare say you do not remember me; my name is Crone.”

The young lady just turned her head a little to one side, as if looking for something.

“Give me my spectacles, will you?” she said, in the calmest tone imaginable.

I started forward to obey, blundering about in search of them, until at last I descried them on the window-sill. She took them from me, and placed them on her nose, looking as if now she was prepared for anything. Mr. Crone took a seat, but not finding another just at hand, I remained standing.

“I hope you are better, Miss Goldburg, and that your rapid journey will not have done you any material injury.”

Mr. Crone was determined on making a polite beginning.

“And what do you want?” said she, turning her spectacles on him.

Mr. Crone was obliged to plunge into it.

“Why, Miss Goldburg, I want to speak to you about this very painful business, and I hope you will

satisfy me at once on one point, and then I shall give you no further trouble."

Miss Goldburg not saying a word, Mr. Crone continued, shuffling his chair a little more forward.

"All I want to ascertain—and, as a magistrate, I am bound to do it—is, did you see the man who shot you, and did you know him?"

"How do you know it was a man?"

"Why, of course, it could not well be a woman."

"It might, or it might have been a boy."

She adjusted her spectacles as she spoke, and I suppose they got tangled in her hair, for she kept her hand up to her head a little bit.

"Don't try to put me off, Miss Goldburg, because it will not be of any use."

"And that man is here as witness, I suppose?"

By "that man," she meant me.

"Do you know who it was, Miss Goldburg?"

Miss Goldburg might have been deaf, for the calm unconcern of her silence. Mr. Crone looked at her as hard as man could look, and I am sure I did the same, for I could not remove my eyes from her face, so amazed did I feel at its unchangeability. And yet it was not an impassive face by any means: all soft and round, notwithstanding her illness; placid and calm as possible, the lips might have had no more to conceal

In her languid voice, she asked, “And what is it?”

“Who was the man who shot you?”

“I cannot swear to the person.”

Mr. Crone was silent a moment, then pointing to me, he said, “But you said it was not that gentleman; can you swear to that?”

She just glanced at me, and answered,—“You know it was not him.”

“Nay, I only know it on your assertion.”

“How could it be him?”

“That I cannot say; but unless you can swear it was *not* him, we must take him into custody.”

“Nonsense,” was her only observation.

“I am quite serious, Miss Goldburg. If you did not see the individual well enough to swear to him, general suspicion will rest very heavily on Mr. Lookabout.”

“Who’s that?” said she, again settling her spectacles.

“This gentleman here.”

“Oh, his name is Lookabout, is it?”

“My impression is, that you know who it was, Miss Goldburg, and that you have told Mr. Thorn.”

“Who?”

“Your lover, Mr. Thorn.”

“I have no lover.”

“Your engagement to Mr. Thorn is well known, Miss Goldburg.”

“Very likely, but it is dissolved.”

She spoke this as carelessly as if she had been speaking of a dissolution of parliament.

“You have made Mr. Thorn take an oath not to reveal it.”

“I have not.”

Mr. Crone was going to contradict her, I saw; so I put in my voice.

“If you remember, he never said Miss Goldburg had made him take the oath, Mr. Crone.”

“I should think not,” she remarked.

“Well, Mr. Thorn must be *made* to speak,” said Mr. Crone.

“Mr. Thorn is not in England,” observed Miss Goldburg.

“Not in England!” exclaimed Mr. Crone. “Where is he gone?”

“How should I know?”

“There is the strongest connivance and prevarication among all concerned in this business,” said Mr. Crone, now quite angry. “And if you persist in your obstinacy, Miss Goldburg, you will be the cause of disgracing, perhaps, an innocent man.”

“I cannot help it,” she replied, very coolly.

“Perhaps! Mr. Crone,” I exclaimed, indignantly. “Why, you know quite well how innocent I am.”

“If Miss Goldburg will not vouch for your innocence, how can I?”

“Miss Goldburg,” I said, addressing her for the first time, “you *can* swear it was not me.”

“You are not afraid, surely,” she said.

“No, I am not afraid.” Whether I spoke quite truly, I don’t know. “But you see the consequences may be very unpleasant; and as you were so very kind as to clear me before you fainted that day, I don’t quite understand why you should hesitate to confirm your words now.”

She gave a little smile to my speech, and that was all. Really she was very pretty; but I felt inclined to shake her, and did not wonder at Mr. Crone’s suppressed wrath.

“Miss Goldburg, we must have recourse to harsher measures, as you will not be reasonable.”

“Are you going before my uncle comes?” she asked, still quite unconcerned.

“No,” said Mr. Crone; “we shall stay and see Mr. Goldburg.”

“I can’t ring the bell, because of my arm; perhaps you will do it for yourselves.”

A pretty plain dismissal this!

“ We must see Mr. Goldburg in your presence,” said Mr. Crone.

“ Must you ; then ring for my maid, please.”

Mr. Crone seemed to consider whether he should or not ; but I sprang forward to do her bidding. As I passed her couch, after I had done so, she looked at me, and said, “ You know they can’t hurt you ; there was no witness.”

Mr. Crone, if he heard, pretended not to have any idea of what she meant.

“ Is your arm very painful, Miss Goldburg ? ” I asked.

“ Not very. Quite useless for the present, though.”

Mr. Crone looked as hard-hearted as possible.

“ I suppose you have a doctor here ? ” was my next observation.

“ I have two.”

“ Oh, indeed ! Of course your uncle is very anxious ? ”

“ To get me across the channel ? Yes, very.”

As she spoke, the door opened, and who should walk in, but the rigid woman of Cote Hall. She had a little tray in her hand, upon which were placed a medicine-bottle and glass.

“ You remembered your medicine, miss,” she said, in a tone of rather surprised approval.

“ Oh, no, Mrs. Ursula,” answered Miss Goldburg,

as though so much memory was never to be required of her.

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Mr. Crone, suddenly, “ this saves me a journey to Cote Hall. What did Miss Goldburg say to Mr. Thorn the day she was shot, Mrs. Ursula ? ”

Mrs. Ursula stared till the pupils of her eyes seemed to grow pointed.

“ You were nearer to her than any one else, and doubtless are aware of all that passed between them. I should have examined you immediately, only I thought your services might be necessary to Miss Goldburg’s life.”

I thought I could detect a little uneasiness of mind as well as body, in the slight motion Miss Goldburg made on the sofa. Mrs. Ursula hastened to her side with the physic ; and while she administered it, Mr. Crone was silent, but as soon as she had done, he said,—“ Now, Mrs. Ursula, answer me.”

“ I don’t listen to what lovers say,” answered Mrs. Ursula, grimly.

“ You did *not* hear what Miss Goldburg said to Mr. Thorn, then ? Is that what you mean ? Can you swear you did not hear anything ? ”

“ I heard Miss Goldburg ask Mr. Thorn to have the two men that held that gentleman, removed.”

“ And is that all ? ”

“ I did not hear a word Mr. Thorn said.”

“And not another word Miss Goldburg said.”

“Haven’t I told you what she said?” answered Mrs. Ursula, crossly. “Here is Mr. Goldburg coming, you had better ask him.”

She knew his step, and so did I. With a jerking twist of the handle, the door flew open, and Mr. Goldburg entered.

“How is this, Mrs. Ursula? How dare you allow Miss Goldburg to be annoyed by strangers?”

“It was not I that showed them in, sir.”

Mr. Goldburg turned upon us. “Really, you show very little gentlemanly feeling, to harass a young lady in this way.”

Mr. Crone was ready for him.

“You have no one but yourself to blame if the lady is harassed, Mr. Goldburg. I should have waited until she was perfectly recovered, if you had not run away with her in so unaccountable a way.”

Mr. Goldburg muttered something about being “hunted over the country,” and “a nuisance.”

“Mr. Goldburg,” continued Mr. Crone, “I must insist on your speaking, or making your niece speak.”

“Mr. Crone, if my niece will not speak to your satisfaction, I cannot help it; and as to myself, I know nothing whatever of the matter which has brought you here.”

“Can you solemnly declare that you do not know who attempted your niece’s life?”

Mr. Goldburg evaded Mr. Crone’s eyes, as he replied, “I can, and I do. Now let us adjourn to another room.”

I had always noticed Mr. Goldburg’s dislike to a fixed look being directed at him, and his niece seemed aware of the fact, for she kept her eyes studiously away from his face. Her pallor had increased so much, that even Mr. Crone noticed it, and acquiesced in Mr. Goldburg’s proposal to leave the room. She slightly inclined her head, in return for our bows and hopes that she would soon be quite well again, and we departed.

“My dear,” I heard Mr. Goldburg say, as he followed us, “You will have no further trouble.”

I hoped his confidence was not premature. He led us out of the hotel, instead of into another room.

“Now, Mr. Crone, I do hope you will let this matter drop. There can be no use in your troubling yourself any further.”

“That is my affair. As to your crossing over to the continent, Mr. Goldburg, it is quite out of the question, unless you can give bail for your appearance when called upon.”

“Bail! I can neither be surety for myself, nor get any one else to be surety for me. You don’t con-

sider, Mr. Crone, that you are speaking to a man who has lost his all in India. My niece's little pittance is our whole support."

"Well, then, give me your word of honour that you will not go over to France, till you hear from me again, and I shall be satisfied."

Mr. Goldburg demurred.

"My niece's health requires it—and, besides, it is cheaper living."

"I don't think your niece cares to go."

"Did she say so?"

"Oh, no; but she seems so indifferent to everything, so apathetic, in fact."

Mr. Goldburg did not either agree to, or dissent from Mr. Crone's opinion. I should never have defined Miss Goldburg as apathetic; the expression of her face, though so perfectly calm, could never be called that. Mr. Goldburg having considered awhile, came to this resolution:—"Well, Mr. Crone, I will promise to remain in this place a fortnight, if that will suit you."

"Very well, with this condition, that Mr. Look-about remains here."

"As a spy!" exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, furiously.
"Never!"

"What I was going to say, if you would have allowed me to finish, is this. Every one would blame

me for taking merely the word of a man I know nothing about. I do not doubt that you will keep that word, but I must have information that you do so for the satisfaction of others."

"You place me in a very uncomfortable position, Mr. Crone," I said, hardly knowing whether to be sorry or glad of his unexpected arrangement.

"Yes, odious!" exclaimed Mr. Goldburg; "you can never accept it, I am sure."

"I could put you in a worse position, Mr. Look-about; and, indeed, you have no choice between it and the county jail."

"What?" inquired Mr. Goldburg.

"Your niece will not decidedly exculpate this gentleman, and a very strong case might be made out against him. As you are aware, he was found prowling about the premises."

"I will be bail for Mr. Goldburg," I said.

"I will not accept your bail, sir," he answered, in the proudest manner.

"Mr. Goldburg, pray make your niece take her oath it was not me."

"I have no influence with my niece," he answered, shortly.

"Then I see no alternative but his remaining here," said Mr. Crone.

Mr. Goldburg looked lost in thought.

“If he returned with me, and the result of my interview with Miss Goldburg became known, I should have no power to keep him out of jail.”

“Very well, very well,” said Mr. Goldburg, rousing up. “Let him stay then, but as a mere matter of form, mind.”

“Of course,” answered Mr. Crone.

He then took his leave, and I accompanied him to the station, where he had to wait some time for a train.

“Mind you keep a sharp look-out, Mr. Lookabout. Congenial occupation, I should think,” were his last words.

FOURTH JOURNEY.

I ESTABLISHED myself in the hotel, and saw nothing of the Goldburgs that day ; but the next morning, I was somewhat startled by seeing Miss Goldburg lifted into a carriage, which had driven up to the door. I left my position behind the window curtain, and hastened down stairs ; in the passage stood Mr. Goldburg.

“ Ah ! Mr. Lookabout, we are not going to make our escape from surveillance. There is our address.”

He tossed me a piece of paper on which it was written, and hurried out. I followed him, in the hopes of finding some excuse for speaking to Miss Goldburg, but the cab drove off as I reached it.

In the course of the day I reconnoitred the exterior of the lodgings they had taken, but dared not do more than pass them once, for fear of giving offence to Mr. Goldburg. I then secured a lodging as near them as I could find one disengaged ; and after that, had full leisure to feel as unsettled, as a man in my position might be expected to be. Once, towards evening, I had a glimpse of Mrs. Ursula, and a gentleman, whom I imagined to be the doctor. Fearing Miss Goldburg

had suffered from her removal, I waited about, determined to ask him about her when he came out of the house ; this he very soon did, but in company with Mr. Goldburg. Hastily withdrawing in time, I hoped to have escaped their observation, I yet perceived the gentleman was not the doctor, but Mr. Cecil Cote.

“ If I could but follow them unobserved,” I thought ; but the experiment was too dangerous to be attempted. Next morning I had a letter from Mr. Crone, telling me that on his return, he had heard Mr. Forrester was gone to London for an indefinite time. I was left to make my own comments on this, and one or two other circumstances the letter contained. Putting it in my pocket, I called to ask after Miss Goldburg.

“ Pretty well,” was the answer delivered by the lodging servant.

Notwithstanding that this might be deemed satisfactory enough, I repeated my inquiries for the next three days. In my wanderings about the town and promenade, I occasionally met Mr. Goldburg, and received from him a passing nod. What should I do to get better acquainted with them ? This was the question I asked myself over and over again, without being able to hit on any plan for solving it. But on the fourth day, what was my surprise and delight, on seeing Miss Goldburg strolling on the promenade !

That odious woman was with her, but that did not prevent my accosting her with congratulations. In the impulse of the moment I extended my hand, but she did not release her right arm from that of Mrs. Ursula, on which she leant, and her left was in a kind of sling. I was not to be daunted, however, and walked on by her side. I tried all kinds of small talk, without being able to draw a single word from her ; a feeble little "hum" was the only token she gave of being aware of my presence and my loquacity. At last a piece of luck happened to me ; I was pointing out something to her notice—I forget what—for the third time, when she asked Mrs. Ursula, who carried a small bag, to give her her spectacles. Mrs. Ursula was sometime fumbling in the bag for them ; Miss Goldburg put out her hand to take them, looking another way the while, and they slipped to the ground. Instantly my foot was on them,—not accidentally, no, it was the most brilliant instance of presence of mind that ever occurred to me in my life. A little suppressed "Oh!" came from Miss Goldburg. Trying to look as contrite as I possibly could, I begged her to forgive me, and I would get them so beautifully repaired, that she need never have to remember any accident had befallen them.

"I can get them mended," she said.

"To be sure, miss," put in that horrid Mrs. Ursula ; "I'll get them done for you."

I had got them safe in my pocket, and was not going to give them up. It was not Miss Goldburg's nature to offer active resistance to anything, so all she said was,—“But what am I to do in the meantime?”

“Oh, you shall have them this evening,” I eagerly replied.

“But the glasses suited me so well; I shall never have such another pair.”

“You shall never know the difference. Do you wear them for short-sightedness?”

“No; I have an old sight, I believe.”

I was longing to ask her if she had them on, the moment she received her wound, but I feared any allusion to the subject might be distasteful. I was discreet enough, also, to take leave of her some distance from her temporary home, and then, with the broken spectacles in my hand, I went in search of an optician. Late in the evening of that same day, I knocked at the door of Mr. Goldburg's lodging. A girl opened it and stared blankly in my face, while I requested to be shown into Miss Goldburg's presence. She seemed lamentably undecided whether to admit me or not, holding the door in her hand and looking over her shoulder, in a most aggravating fashion. A look of great relief coming over her face, I thought she had come to some happy decision, but at the same instant

she made a sudden retreat in favour of Mrs. Ursula, who was making a steady and stately advance up the passage.

“Have you brought the spectacles?” she asked, with a portentous frown.

“I must see Miss Goldburg about them,” was my reply.

“You can give them to me; Miss Goldburg does not like to be disturbed.”

“I am perfectly aware of that, but please to tell her I am here.”

As I had once had experience of Mrs. Ursula’s ways, I stepped beside her into the passage, just in time to prevent her shutting the door upon me. She went grimly upstairs, and presently after, I heard her deep voice mutter these words over the bannister, “You can walk up.” Up I went, two steps at a time, but my pleasure was considerably damped, by seeing Mrs. Ursula seated near the couch on which Miss Goldburg reclined.

“Well, have you brought my spectacles?” she asked, with a faint smile.

“No, Miss Goldburg, but I have brought you all these,” and I turned a bundle of spectacles out of my coat-pocket, “that you may choose the pebbles that suit you best.”

“Dear me! what a trouble,” she said, sighing.

I had not thought of her taking this view of the subject; my only idea had been to make as many journeys to the house, as could possibly be made out of a pair of spectacles.

“I will leave them with you, and come for them to-morrow.”

“Oh, if I *must* try them on, I suppose there is nothing to prevent my doing so now.”

Saying this, she languidly took up a pair from where they lay beside her on the sofa.

“*These* won’t do.”

I devoutly hoped there was not a single pair among them that *would* do. After dropping the first pair, heedless of where they might alight, she fell back on the couch, as though having no intention of trying any more until she had taken a good rest. Mrs. Ursula had brought out a piece of work from her pocket, and sat apparently absorbed in its intricacy. I was rather surprised at Mr. Goldburg’s non-appearance, so by way of saying something, I asked after him.

“Oh, uncle is gone to London, didn’t you know?”

“No;” and I was going to add that I ought to have known, when it occurred to me that perhaps she was not aware of the capacity in which I was staying at Dover.

“Did he go with Mr. Cote?” I asked.

“With who?”

There was a little accent of surprise in her voice, and instinctively her hand was put forth to the spectacles ; I suppose she was a little absent, for she actually took a pair and placed them on her pretty little nose, as if they had been her own.

“ I asked you if he went with Mr. Cote.”

“ Which Mr. Cote ?”

“ Mr. Cecil Cote, who was here the other day.”

“ Dear me, I can’t see at all.”

She took the ugly things from her nose, and looked as hard as her soft languid eyes could look at Mrs. Ursula. That elderly dame had her eyes fixed on me, but she dropped them, and absorbed herself in her work again.

“ *Did* he go with Mr. Cote ?” I asked again.

“ I’m sure I don’t know.”

“ You know when he is coming back, I suppose ?”

“ No, I don’t.”

Mr. Crone would be very angry I thought, but I did not much mind Mr. Goldburg’s defection, so long as he left his niece behind as hostage. She was a provoking little thing though, and the worst of it was, that, brimful as I was of questions that I longed to put to her, it was with difficulty I overcame a certain fear of going too far, with which she inspired me. That woman, too, was sadly in my way.

“ Have you given up the glasses, Miss Goldburg ?”

“ Well, I’ll try another pair, but I know they won’t do.”

She accordingly balanced them on her nose, but being much too large, they slipped off and fell on the floor.

“ Oh, are those broken too?” she asked.

“ Never mind if they are.”

“ Do take them all away, please, and bring me mine.”

She gave those on the floor a little kick, pushing the others towards me at the same time with her hand. I gathered them all up, and deposited the parcel in my pocket again; but I was determined to stay a little longer, and make sure of being admitted on the morrow.

“ What time shall I be most likely to find you at home to-morrow, Miss Goldburg?”

“ Oh, any time.”

“ Any time is no time, and you are as difficult of access as royalty itself; so I should like you to fix a time.”

“ For what?”

“ For seeing me.”

“ Still I must ask, for what?”

“ Why, for delivering your glasses, which I hope to do in the morning.”

“ Can’t you leave them at the door?”

“To be sure he can, miss,” put in that old ogress.

“I should like to have the satisfaction of hearing you say they are all right.”

“Mrs. Ursula will tell you if they are, sometime.”

“Why won’t you see me?”

“Oh, I don’t mind seeing you.”

“Well then, do.”

“Very well, it’s of no consequence.”

“Shall I find you about twelve?”

“I can’t say.”

“If I take my chance, and you are at home, will you see me?”

“Oh yes, I have no objection; but mind you bring my *own* spectacles.”

“Yes, that I will.”

“Very well, then; good-by.”

I took no notice of this dismissal, but went on talking on the first subject that came into my head.

“Do you like the thought of going on the Continent, Miss Goldburg?”

“I have not thought about it.”

“Indeed! you do not wish it then, I suppose?”

“Not particularly; travelling is such a trouble.”

“Not for you; your uncle would take all the trouble.”

“Very true. He is full of trouble when we travel. We never seem to be going to the right place.”

“ He seems very nervous,” I remarked.

“ You think he is very nervous? Does Mr. Crone think him so?”

I was rather surprised to hear her mention Mr. Crone.

“ Oh yes, I fancy he does; everybody must see it in his manner.”

She remained silent and thoughtful, while I spoke on, lest a pause should oblige me to take my leave.

“ If you go abroad, will it be your first visit to the Continent?”

“ I beg your pardon; did you speak?”

I repeated my question, though I felt it was high time to go, when she became so absent.

“ Oh dear no,” she answered; “ I was at school in Germany.”

“ Indeed! may I ask where?”

“ You may if you like, but I can’t tell you.”

“ Why, is it a secret?”

“ No, but it is a puzzle,—I mean the name of the place is. I never could pronounce it, so of course don’t remember it. Mrs. Ursula, we want lights, and you can show Mr. —,—I quite forget your name,—down stairs; good-by.”

Mrs. Ursula started up with alacrity, and almost pushed me down when she got me fairly on the landing. Miss Goldburg had shaken hands with me however,

which was a little comfort. I took the spectacles back to the optician, and producing the broken pebbles I had hitherto held back, Miss Goldburg's sight was soon fitted, I feared only too exactly. I had never written to Mr. Crone, and I did not much like doing so now, so I thought I would put it off a day or two, and see if Mr. Goldburg returned in the meantime.

But the following morning brought a change to my plans; for another letter from Mr. Crone arrived, upbraiding me on account of my tardiness in sending him a report of our semi-prisoners. However, I postponed an answer to this letter until after I should have called on Miss Goldburg. No opposition was offered to my entrance this time; but as she had forgotten my name, I sent my card up by the servant, and followed leisurely in its rear. I had not seen Mrs. Ursula, but I imagined I should find her keeping guard over her mistress. I never anticipated seeing Mr. Goldburg; yet there he was, seated at the table, writing. He looked, in his quick, sudden way, at me as I entered.

"How d'you do, Mr. Lookabout? what brings you here this morning?"

Miss Goldburg saved me the trouble of continuing the roundabout explanation, I had begun in answer to her uncle's question.

“Mr. Lookabout has brought me my spectacles, uncle. He broke them the other day.”

“Yes, I was so unfortunate,” I began, hypocritically.

“Broke them! how should he break your spectacles, my dear?” asked Mr. Goldburg, turning towards his niece, with raised eyebrows.

“By putting his foot on them, uncle.”

Mr. Goldburg gave me a suspicious glance, and said no more on the subject; perhaps he reserved cross-examining his niece till my departure. She had taken her spectacles from me, and was now trying their powers by peeping into every corner of the room.

“Are they all right?” I asked.

“Yes, I think so; I can see very tolerably.”

“Oh, but they must be more than tolerable.”

“They’ll do, thank you.”

She settled the cushion behind her with her only useful hand, and took up a book she had beside her. Mr. Goldburg’s pen scratched on, and I felt rather awkward in the silence, but summoned all my energies to keep my footing a little longer in that hard-to-reach parlour.

“Have you heard from Mr. Crone, Mr. Goldburg?”

“Heard from Mr. Crone! How should I hear from Mr. Crone?”

“Oh, I thought he might have written, to tell you if anything had transpired.”

“I don’t know what there is to transpire. Of course, *you* hear from Mr. Crone; has he told *you* that something has transpired?”

“I heard from him this morning; he has only told me that Mr. Forrester went to London a few days ago.”

“And why should he mention that? I can’t see what that has to say to the matter.”

“Well, neither can I, except that Mr. Forrester is a principal witness.”

“Principal witness! to what?”

“Why, he was examined, if you remember.”

“Examined, was he? Ah! yes, I recollect;” and Mr. Goldburg betook himself to his pen again, with a rapidity that said, as plain as words could do,—“I have had enough of that subject, and am attending to another, so don’t interrupt me.”

Miss Goldburg had never raised her eyes from her book, but now she just glanced up, and said,—“I can see very well, and it is a small print, you see.”

She tossed me the book, which was a German one.

“Why, Miss Goldburg, you said you could not remember a German name, and here I see you read German!”

“ I don’t read it ; I skim it.”

“ What German name could she not remember ?” asked Mr. Goldburg.

“ Where I was at school, uncle.”

“ Oh !”

“ Do you like German books ?” I asked, glad of anything to keep up the conversation.

“ Some.”

“ Which ?”

“ Those I like.”

“ Who is your favourite author ?”

“ I don’t care about authors, but books.”

“ Well, but there is an author to every book.”

“ Is there ? I thought there was one author to a great many books.”

“ She won’t even tell me what style of book she likes best ; how can I hope to get anything else out of her ?” was my discouraging reflection.

“ Well, Miss Goldburg, if you will not tell me who is your favourite author, will you tell me if that woman, you call Mrs. Ursula, is a favourite of yours ?”

“ And why do you ask that ?” put in Mr. Goldburg, sharply.

“ Because Mr. Crone wishes to know if she can be spared ; and I should be sorry Miss Goldburg should be deprived of her, if she likes her.”

“ What does the man want Mrs. Ursula for ?”

"Well, uncle, she is not wanted here. She does not belong to us, you know, Mr. Lookabout."

"So I understand. She is the housekeeper at Cote Hall, is she not?"

"Yes, I believe so. I wonder Mr. Cote can spare her, uncle."

"My dear, you cannot do without a servant; you know you cannot."

"Oh dear, no! I must have a maid, of course; but I should prefer one of my own, and a girl, I think."

"Mr. Cote was most anxious she should stay and nurse you; there can be no reason for hurrying her back."

"Just as you like, uncle."

"Nay, if you don't like the woman, there is an end of it; send her back at once."

"Oh, you must manage that, uncle, as you managed her coming with me here."

"Very well, very well," he said, impatiently, and returned to his writing.

Here I thought it best to take my leave. Mr. Goldburg just glanced up to throw a nod at me, as it were, but his niece extended her hand, which made me more determined than ever, that Mrs. Ursula should be removed without delay; for, hard as it was to fathom Miss Goldburg's likes and dislikes, I felt pretty sure that Mrs. Ursula's departure, would

not be unacceptable to that young lady. I therefore returned home immediately, to answer Mr. Crone's letter. I had not remarked on Mr. Goldburg's journey to London, for fear of committing his niece, but I had expected, throughout my visit, that he would make some allusion to it. As he had not, I was silent about the journey in my letter to Mr. Crone, and I merely said, things were much as he had left them, only that Miss Goldburg was quite convalescent, and Mrs. Ursula could *well* be spared. Not content with this, I added a postscript, to say, that I hoped he would get her removed directly; and then it first occurred to me to mention Mr. Cecil Cote's visit.

One week had now passed away, and in another, if nothing happened to prevent it, Mr. Goldburg would be at liberty to go anywhere he liked. I had no longer an excuse for calling; and to pass the ensuing week without seeing Miss Goldburg was an impossibility for me, as I felt not only attracted towards her, but distractedly curious about many things.

One day passed away without my having the slightest glimpse of either Mr. or Miss Goldburg; on the second day, as I sat thinking disconsolately in the gloaming, who should my landlady show in, but Mr. Goldburg!

“And so you have had Mrs. Ursula summoned away.”

“I—really, Mr. Goldburg, I had no idea she was gone ; *is* she gone ?”

“ You had no idea she was gone, but you had a great idea she would go,” said he, flinging himself into a chair.

“ I was bound to tell Mr. Crone that Miss Goldburg was convalescent, and so, I suppose, he has thought fit to summon her.”

“ Oh, no ! he delegated that duty to Mr. Cecil Cote, her master, or, I should say, her master’s son. But what do they want with the woman ? can you tell me that ? Do they think she shot my niece ?” and he laughed sarcastically.

“ I really cannot inform you what they want her for, Mr. Goldburg ; Mr. Crone has not told me.”

“ Oh, indeed ! you are not *quite* in his confidence, then ;” and Mr. Goldburg laughed again. He seemed to me to enjoy being in the dark very much ; there was an odd kind of merriment in his manner, completely new to me.

“ I will ring for lights,” I said, going towards the bell.

“ No, no ; what do you want lights for ? But tell me—what was Mr. Crone asking the woman before my niece ?”

“ Do you mean on the day we came down here ?”

“ Yes.”

Should I tell him or not? I hesitated.

“ Well.”

“ Why, I believe Mr. Crone thought she was likely to have heard what Miss Goldburg said to Mr. Thorn.”

“ How? when?”

“ Don’t you remember, she stood close to the couch on the day—”

“ Yes, yes; I know; I remember now. And did she hear?”

“ She said not.”

“ Ah!” A short silence ensued. “ Ever harping on what my niece said to her lover!”

“ Where is Mr. Thorn?” I ventured to ask.

“ I don’t know.”

“ I wonder at him going away.”

“ Why?”

“ It seems strange, that’s all.”

Mr. Goldburg laughed again, if it could be called laughing.

“ Do they suspect *him*?”

“ Oh, Mr. Goldburg!”

“ Well, it would not be the first time a lover had been suspected.”

“ You cannot possibly mean *you* do so, surely, Mr. Goldburg!”

“ Me! oh dear, no! I asked *you* if he was sus-

pected. Lovers have done such things ; so, I should not be very much surprised, if Mr. Crone *had* felt a little uneasy about him."

"Mr. Thorn's refusal to speak, is the only thing against him, that I know of."

"What ! you think he ought to have been all eagerness to trace the villain ?"

"That would have seemed the most natural thing to expect from him."

"Yes, it certainly would. Have you formed any idea as to the probable reason of his supineness ?"

"Have you, Mr. Goldburg ?"

"I asked *you*, Mr. Lookabout. Answer me, frankly, and I will then do the same."

"Well, Mr. Goldburg, of course you think I *must* have imagined some reason ; but I am anything but an imaginative man, as you may have discovered by this time."

I could not give him a franker answer than this, though inclined to say anything, that might procure me his promised frankness in return.

"Do you call that a frank answer, Mr. Lookabout ?"

"I have no other to give, Mr. Goldburg."

"Well, then, I will treat you better than you deserve. If you have any surmise, I tell you, *I have none.*"

He placed such emphasis on the last word, that I involuntarily started. I could not distinguish anything but the outline of his figure, as he sat there with his back to the little light, or rather twilight, that could penetrate the dusty window-panes. As he pronounced that last word, I could tell by the sound that he had struck one hand against the other. I really had not a word to say, so another silence of longer duration followed. I had a feeling that his eyes were glaring at me, though I could not see them. Nothing could well have come more opportunely and acceptably to me, at such a moment, than the remembrance that I had not inquired after Miss Goldburg.

“I hope Miss Goldburg is going on well,” I said, as off-hand as I could.

“Oh yes, yes; she will throw away her sling soon. Well, now I must go. Good morning,” and he dashed abruptly out of the room.

“Good morning, at this time of night! Why what is the man thinking of?” I exclaimed, half aloud.

“What, sir? did you speak?”

My landlady had entered the room to shut the shutters, as I could see by the glimmering of the candles she had left in the hall.

“That gentleman you had, was in a great hurry, sir; he nearly threw me over with the candles. I

thought to have come with them before, but as you generally ring, I didn't."

"I wish you had," thought I, for to have seen Mr. Goldburg's face while he spoke, I would have given a great deal.

The fortnight was drawing to a conclusion, and I received no letter from Mr. Crone. Once I met uncle and niece out walking; not together, for he was far in advance of her, and except that he occasionally stopped to look round, and let her get a degree nearer, no one would have guessed she belonged to him. It was very hard to resist my strong inclination to join her; "but with that uncle in front," I reasoned with myself, "what possible satisfaction can you promise yourself in the rear?" So I passed him with a bow, and her, with a senseless "How do you do, Miss Goldburg?" for which she gave me a little bend of her neck, and I dare say she thought even that a great trouble. "If Mr. Crone does not write, I shall not be able to keep them here after to-morrow, and what shall I do?"

Mentally repeating this, and abusing Mr. Crone not a little, I determined to keep a strict look-out on them, that at least they might not go without my knowledge. Accordingly I passed through the street where they lodged, many times on the following day, regardless of any offence that might be taken by Mr. Goldburg if he saw me. I felt rather uneasy, as

I was returning to my lodgings about five o'clock, because I had not seen either him or his niece in the course of my wanderings ; but, on turning the corner into my own street, I was considerably relieved to see him coming towards me on the opposite side. I hardly think he perceived me, as several people came between us ; at any rate, no token of recognition was given by him, and his rapid strides soon placed him out of sight. Notwithstanding my having thus had proof that the Goldburgs had not run away, I yet could not feel comfortable, and, having eat some dinner, my steps were once more directed towards their lodgings.

I did not walk through the street, but contented myself with keeping the house in sight, while pretending to be absorbed in the contemplation of shop windows, just about to close. I had been doing this some time, when a cab came rattling round the corner, and drew up at the Goldburgs' door. My eyes remained fixed there now ; before the cabman could knock, Mr. Goldburg appeared on the doorstep, and I retreated into a chemist's, from whence I could see, without being seen.

Mr. Goldburg was impatience personified ; in and out, in and out, evidently hurrying poor Miss Goldburg, without any consideration for her wounded arm. I wondered how she got on without Mrs. Ursula, and whether she had procured a maid more to her mind.

At last he seemed to have got her down stairs, for, instead of rushing into the house, he contented himself with sundry taps at the parlour window with his umbrella, so I concluded she had gone there for something. The cabman then came out with a box and various parcels; Mr. Goldburg's portmanteau had long since been deposited in the cab. I might go and stop their departure, I thought, for the fortnight did not expire till the next day; but then I did not want to irritate Mr. Goldburg into a quarrel; better follow them to the station, and learn where they were bound, in a private manner. As I made up my mind to this course of action, Miss Goldburg made her appearance, and was instantly seized upon by her uncle, who pushed her into the cab, regardless of a backward look, which seemed to imply she had forgotten something. A neat little maid mounted up to the box, and away they went. I followed as rapidly as my legs could go. I would not take a cab, because I wished them to be well in the station, luggage and all, before my arrival there. I knew they could not embark at that hour, fortunately for Miss Goldburg's delicate state of health; so they must be going by land. It had come on to rain, and the evening was very cold for summer. I entered the station, and the first thing that met my eye, was the luggage belonging to the people I was so interested in. But most

provoking ! it was so placed that the name of "Goldburg" alone was visible. The niece of course was in the ladies' waiting-room ; but where was the uncle ? I looked round, I could not see him anywhere. A train came in, and the porters hurried about ; one went up to the luggage I had kept in view.

"Is it going by this train ?" I asked, following him.

"Yes, sir, this train for London."

He raised the box, and I saw a very plainly written address ; but it was not London. Puzzled at this, I ventured to walk along the platform, looking cautiously about me to avoid coming in contact with the man I was searching for, and very soon I saw him, at the waiting-room door, again hurrying that poor niece of his to come forth, and be at his disposal. This being the case, I darted back, and took a ticket for London. As I left the office, it occurred to me to ask if the train stopped anywhere on the way.

"Yes, twice ; but you'll be late, it will be off in a second."

No time to ask more ; I must be on the look-out, when the train *did* stop, that was all ; so I swung myself into a carriage, as it made, what turned out to be only a deceptive start ; but I dared not leave it again, for if I missed returning in time, all trace of the Goldburgs might be lost for ever.

It was not very long before we came to a full stop, and I was instantly on the alert to get out of the carriage, but a porter, passing by, informed me we should not stop five minutes. I asked if anyone was getting out, and he answered in the negative ; but, notwithstanding, I kept my head out of the window until we were fairly off again, much to the annoyance of a stout lady, who was devouring grapes, and could not throw the husks out. It was sometime before we stopped again, but then I saw that Mr. Goldburg had alighted. I could not do the same, because I should instantly have been seen by him, so I watched him flitting about, and hastily addressing this and that official ; but, as Miss Goldburg was not with him, I concluded they were going on to London after all. The grape lady querulously observed to a thin and dismal-looking female beside her, "that people did get such blood-shot eyes, by keeping their heads out of windows, more especially *railway* windows." Her companion, in reply, remarked, she supposed so.

I felt comfortably certain, however, that in whatever state my eyes might be, they could not possibly have missed Miss Goldburg, and therefore most likely she was comfortably dozing on her way to London. No more stoppages occurred, and so, in a very short time, there we arrived, and I believe I was the first to jump out. The crowd of people prevented my seeing any-

thing just at first, and as I was not quite certain in which part of the train the Goldburgs might be, I wandered about in a fearful state of mind. Most of the passengers had dispersed, when I descried a porter scrambling after some luggage, which he deposited beside a lady seated on a box. She had a thick veil over her face, but I recognized her, and the little maid standing at her side. Reckless of what she might think, I at once presented myself, and asked her if I could be of any use.

“No, thank you ; that porter has promised to see to everything.”

“But where is your uncle, Miss Goldburg ?”

“I can’t tell, really. He got out somewhere on the road, and never got in again.”

“Did you mean to come on to London ?”

“Did my uncle mean, you should say. No ; I believe we were going somewhere else first, but he would get out to make sure that we were going right.”

“And so you have gone wrong, it seems. But won’t you send a telegram ?”

“Where ?”

“To your uncle.”

“Yes ; but where am I to send it ?”

“Why, to the place where you lost him.”

“I have no idea where that was.”

“You mean you have no recollection of the name.”

“I never noticed the name.”

“Was it not called out?”

“I only heard some shouts.”

“Well, I am happy to say I can inform you where your uncle got out; and if you please, I will send a message to him.”

“Stop,” she gently exclaimed, as I was hurrying away. “It will be of no use, my uncle is not there now.”

“How can you tell that?”

“Because I know him too well to suppose, as you do, that he would stay quietly waiting for a telegram.”

“Then what do you think he has done?”

“Oh, he has excited himself into a fever, I have no doubt; but he will be here as soon as he can, depend on it.”

“Are you not alarmed, Miss Goldburg?”

“What’s the use of being alarmed?”

“Well, no particular use, certainly. But what are you going to do, may I ask?”

“I am going to get away from here,” she answered, rising.

The porter had placed all the luggage on a cab, except the box she had sat upon, which he now came for.

“You are going to some friends, I suppose?” I said, inquiringly.

"I am going to my own house," she replied, and declining my assistance, she entered the cab, and was followed by her maid.

I said no more, for my attention was concentrated on the porter, who had placed his hands each side of his mouth, preparatory to giving forth the address in stentorian tones—"No. 13, Rue Street." The very loudness of the shout confused me; I felt as if I could have heard it better if it had been a whisper. In my anxiety to retain the street, I lost the square tacked on to it, as the cab rattled off; however, that was of little consequence.

FIFTH JOURNEY.

HAVING telegraphed to my landlady at Dover, for my belongings, I adjourned to an hotel for the night.

To go to Rue Street before next morning, would be but a useless fatigue, I argued with myself; and as I feared I had half offended Miss Goldburg already, caution in my future conduct was desirable. Therefore, it was not till nearly noon on the following day, that I stood before No. 13, Rue Street, rather uncertain how to attack the gloomy-looking house. Inquiring after her could only be considered polite and natural, so limiting myself to that, I knocked. Her pleasant-looking little maid speedily made her appearance.

“ How is Miss Goldburg, after her journey ? ”

“ Pretty well, thank you, sir.”

“ Has Mr. Goldburg arrived yet ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Any message from him come ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Will you ask Miss Goldburg if I can do anything for her ?”

“ I’m sure you can’t, sir.”

“ Why ?”

“ Because she told me to say ‘ not at home,’ if you called.”

She said this very simply, but I imagine I must have looked rather fiercely at her, for a frightened blush came over her face, and she retreated further behind the door. I tossed her my card, and walked away, feeling extremely mortified, if the truth must be told.

That afternoon a letter was forwarded to me from Dover; it was from Mr. Crone. He informed me that nothing satisfactory had been extracted from Mrs. Ursula, when she had been examined, both by himself and Mr. Cecil Cote, who had offered bail for Mr. Goldburg to a considerable amount. “ Your watch and ward at Dover is, therefore, at an end,” concluded Mr. Crone; “ but I advise you not to return here at present.” I had no wish to do so. That evening I was again in the street, with the delightful excuse of acquainting Mr. Goldburg, should he have returned, with the bail offered for him. I little thought what I should do besides that night. The same little maid opened the door at my knock.

“Is Mr. Goldburg returned yet?”

“Yes, sir,” was the highly pleasing reply.

“Tell him I want to see him on business.”

“Very well, sir.”

She let me into the hall, and closed the street-door. A tin candlestick, containing a shock-wicked tallow-candle, stood on a solitary chair beside an umbrella-stand, and the unsuspecting little damsel took it up, asking,—“You won’t mind being left in the dark a minute, sir?”

Her young mind did not seem to realize, the probability of my making off with the umbrellas, and the hat and greatcoat on the pegs. While I stood there in the dark waiting, the thought crossed my mind, to whom did that greatcoat belong? Opposite in manner, I had noticed that uncle and niece were also thoroughly opposed in their mode of dressing; Miss Goldburg being always muffled up to the chin, while he, generally, was not only lightly clad, but had everything hanging on his thin figure, rather than clothing it. I could not for a moment fancy that comfortable greatcoat belonged to him. The dim candle flickered on the stairs again, and two steps at a time down came Mr. Goldburg; the little candle-bearer followed him timidly.

“Really, Mr. Lookabout, this is what I call haunting one. What the deuce do you want with me now?”

“ I beg to apologize, Mr. Goldburg, but I thought you might like to hear a communication I have had from Mr. Crone.”

“ Come in here,” he said, pushing open a door near which I had been standing; and turning to the girl,—“ Mary bring the candle here.”

“ *This* candle, sir?” inquired she, hesitating.

“ Yes, that candle, any candle; come, make haste.”

The girl, thus quickened, lost no time in placing it on a worm-eaten little table, in the centre of a forlorn-looking little room, that had nothing in it besides, except a few packages on the bare floor. Dropping a curtsy and blushing distressingly, the young maid hastily withdrew.

“ You must be brief,” said Mr. Goldburg. “ I cannot offer you a chair, you see.”

“ You know, Mr. Goldburg, you left Dover a day sooner than was agreed; but, however, Mr. Crone seems disposed to let the matter drop, for the present at least.”

“ Is that all you have come to tell me?” inquired he; and I saw he was growing very angry.

“ Not all; I have to tell you that Mr. Cecil Cote has offered bail for you, and therefore you are free to go where you like.”

“ Sir! who do you think you are speaking to?”

The wretched little table undulated, for some time after the blow he gave it, as he spoke.

“ I have the honour of speaking to Mr. Goldburg, and as he pleases to take such great offence at a simple civility, I have also the honour of wishing him good night.”

“ And I tell you, Mr. Lookabout, I could have you arrested this moment if I chose. You know you dare not join Mr. Crone, and you dare come spying here to tell *me* I am free, forsooth !”

I was fumbling at the door while he spoke, but it would not give way to my unfastening efforts. I was rather glad of this, though, if ever I felt inward warning that my life was in jeopardy, it was at that moment, when Mr. Goldburg’s eyes were so widely opened as to be horrible to look upon. But then to go away, was to give up Miss Goldburg and everything connected with her for ever, perhaps.

An intense desire to know all about her, and everybody else concerned in the event that had brought me acquainted with her, made me come to a determination that startled myself. With considerable effort I forced myself to look fixedly at him, while I said, as coolly as I could,—“ Mr. Goldburg, I wonder you can look upon me as a spy, when you must be aware of the real reason, that makes me so persisting in cultivating your acquaintance.”

It would not do ; I thought him touched with insanity in his passion, and my unquailing stare was meant to calm him, but there was no hiding from myself that his fury increased.

“ How do they do it ? ” was my despairing internal allusion to mad doctors.

“ Begone directly ! ”

Both his fists came down upon the little table, which gave way with a weak kind of crash, and we were in darkness. How I shook that lock ! I was almost sure he had made a rush at me, but I also felt most hopeful that he had stumbled, and that, together with the darkness, might save me : there was a chance—but oh ! how delightful to my ears was that sweet, languid voice, exclaiming outside,—“ Uncle, what *is* the matter ? ”

“ Go away, go away instantly, my dear,” were the words Mr. Goldburg said fearfully close to my ear ; but his voice, though quick, was subdued.

“ Mustn’t I come in ? ”

“ No, no ; I’ll come to you directly, Alice.”

“ Very well ; don’t make any more noise then.”

Her hand left the door-handle, just as I expected it to give way under her evidently experienced touch. How I longed to beg her to set me free ; but Mr. Goldburg’s hand was on my shoulder, alarmingly near my throat, in fact.

“Be quiet,” he said.

I suppose I struggled a little involuntarily. I wanted to speak, and while I was resolving how I should bring forth what was on my mind, he neither throttled me nor spoke, so I concluded the darkness had a favourable effect on him.

“Mr. Goldburg, *do* let me say a few words to you.”

“Mind *how* you say them, then.”

“I mean to say them in the most respectful manner, and I do trust you will not be hasty.”

“Be quick;” his hand twitched nervously at my coat.

“Yes, I will. I am a gentleman. I am rich, and I am in love with your niece.”

I had said it: would it raise a storm or produce a calm?

“In-deed.”

“You can’t be hard upon me now, Mr. Goldburg. Have you any objection?”

“To what?”

“To me.”

“The greatest possible objection. I think she has got upstairs now, so you may go.”

His hands were employed on the door-handle, which turned to give us egress at last, but we were still in darkness; in a moment, however, he had opened the street-door, and by the dim light that entered, the

change his face had undergone since I had last looked on it, was just visible : a redhot coal soon becomes a cinder, I thought. I dared not press him any further however, but as I walked out, I just observed,— “Should you think better of it, Mr. Goldburg, I am staying at the S—— Hotel. Good night.”

The door closed behind me. My mind was so confused, as to be quite unequal to the task of pioneering my body through the streets, and therefore I was glad to hail the first cab I met ; in the interior of which I tried, as much as the rattle would let me, to collect my ideas. I had said I was in love with Miss Goldburg. Was I ? I could not make up my mind ; but at any rate, I was certain I liked her very much, and had very little doubt but what I should find her charming, on further acquaintance. Mr. Goldburg, however, had rejected me ; Miss Goldburg, no doubt, would have done the same : how could I ever fancy an offer on my part would have given me a footing in that house in Rue Street ?

In the excitement of my feelings, I sat up late that night and wrote to Mr. Crone, telling him where the Goldburgs now were, and the manner in which they had left Dover. I passed the next morning in my room at the hotel, having a vague hope that Mr. Goldburg might call ; but as the day advanced, it became so extremely hot, that I could bear it no

longer. My legs, I found, had a most decided inclination for Rue Street, and so I indulged them.

It looked most deserted ; there was but one human being visible, and that a man smoking at an upper window, nearly opposite No. 13. No. 12 had the shutters closed, and No. 14 was "To let." I passed once up, on one side, and down, on the other, without seeing any thing stirring at No. 13 ; but while deliberating at the corner what to do next, the door flew open, and Mr. Goldburg, hatless, stood on the step. He looked up, and down the street, caught sight of me, and beckoned : in a moment I reached the pavement in front of him, and there paused, for prudence sake, keeping those two or three feet between us.

"Well, you may come in, if you like," was his greeting.

"Indeed ! Thank you, Mr. Goldburg," and I followed him. Bang went the door.

"Now look here, we are going to dinner directly ; if you like to join us you can ; but mind, I don't think you have the shadow of a chance."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Goldburg ; and quite overpowered by this unlooked-for favour," I might have added.

"I have no time for words : walk in there."

He opened the door, pushed me in, and departed, slamming it after him. I was in a large room where

a table in the centre was laid for dinner. Two or three well-smoked pictures hung on the walls, and the windows looked out on a parched grass-plot: there was nothing else to be seen, but a very much worn carpet under the table and a few faded, leather-cushioned chairs, ranged against the wall opposite the three large windows. I had waited some time, when I heard a clock strike five and then jingle a tune, which, after seeming to approach a termination, revived again just as the door opened to admit Miss Goldburg's maid.

“That everlasting clock, Alice; do stop it, will you?”

This was Mr. Goldburg's voice outside.

“Has it struck again, uncle?”

“Struck again! Don't you hear it,—jing, jing, jing.”

“Oh yes, it has done now.”

“That's what you always say; it has never done; there it is again! really, Alice, it's unbearable.”

“Dear me, I never notice it.”

“If you did not notice it, it would not go, and there would be an end of it; but if you forget everything else, you always remember to wind up that thing.”

“Really, uncle, I'm not regular about it by any means. I can't think how it manages to go so well.”

Their voices had been approaching nearer and nearer, and at this point in the dialogue, uncle and

niece entered. The maid retired, having laid a plate for me.

“I am glad to see you have thrown away your sling, Miss Goldburg,” I said.

“How d’you do,” was all she vouchsafed me, and putting on her spectacles, she seated herself at the table.

The little maid returned with a soup-tureen, and Mr. Goldburg commenced doing the honours of the table. My bewilderment was so great, that I am afraid I behaved very awkwardly during the meal. After some very thin soup had been despatched in silence, and a covered dish placed on the table, Mr. Goldburg turned to the servant, and said,—“Now, Mary, you may go, and don’t come again till you are rung for.”

I have not the slightest idea what it was he helped me to; I only know I was extremely surprised to see him sprinkle his own portion with cayenne, for mine made me burn all over with its spiciness. Miss Goldburn did not eat a quarter of what he put upon her plate. She had not once cast her eyes my way. I suppose a nervous man under these circumstances would have died. Anything was better than nothing, so I said,—“You seem to have a nice little maid there, Miss Goldburg. I suppose you got her at Dover.”

“Yes, she is a nice little thing.”

“ You know next to nothing of her, Alice.”

“ I know she was sadly overworked, in that great millinery establishment, uncle.”

“ I don’t think it is at all likely, Miss Goldburg will have cause to regret her kindness.”

I really gave myself no small credit for coming in on her side the question, against so irritable a man as her uncle. All I got for it was,—“ She may turn out well, and she may not; it’s a chance with all servants.”

“ Is she a native of Dover?”

Miss Goldburg, for the first time, turned her head towards me with a look that said,—“ What’s that to you?”

I thought she would give me no verbal reply, however she did.

“ No; she comes from some place a long way off.”

“ Birmingham, my dear,” put in Mr. Goldburg, reaching for the cayenne again. “ A place,” he continued, “ where there are iron works,—great manufacturing town in fact; they make needles and all that sort of thing there—buttons too,” he added as a brilliant afterthought, capable of conveying a lucid idea of the place he was trying to depict, in the most likely manner to impress a female mind.

“ Really!” ejaculated Miss Goldburg, as though much edified, by the information so condescendingly

communicated. Yet he certainly was proud of his niece ; his eye had a complacent expression sometimes, when it rested on her : perhaps he thought more of her person than her mind.

“ Mr. Lookabout, there is nothing else coming but bread and cheese. I dare say you are accustomed to puddings and pies, but we don’t deal in such kick-shaws. Please to ring the bell, will you ?”

I did so, and at the same time imparted my thorough satisfaction with the prospect of bread and cheese after the “ very good dinner, &c.,” I had made ; which was a double piece of hypocrisy, for I plead guilty to a love of sweets ; and the fiery dish I had partaken of, I am firmly persuaded would have been the death of me, if I had taken enough to satisfy my appetite. When the cheese had been removed, Miss Goldburg, to my infinite disappointment, rose to depart.

“ I shall leave you to your wine now, uncle,” she said, as though he alone were present.

“ Very well, dear ; it will be pleasanter for you upstairs, I dare say.”

I rushed to open the door for her, and she passed out without even a “ thank you.” Now she was gone, a most uncomfortable remembrance of the previous evening, made me almost wish to get out of the house, rather than sit *vis-à-vis* to Mr. Goldburg.

“ Mr. Lookabout, why don’t you come to your seat,

I am helping you to some wine ;" he looked round as he spoke.

" Oh, thank you, I was just shutting the door."

He drank his first glass without speaking a word, and I was deplorably at a loss for something to say ; this being the case, it was quite a relief when that refractory clock struck up again ; it broke the dead silence. Mr. Goldburg started nervously, and pushed the wine towards me.

" Well, Mr. Lookabout, do you, upon the encouragement you have received, mean to come here any more ?"

" May I ask if Miss Goldburg is aware of my offer ?"

" No, she is not."

" Oh, well then, I shall persevere."

" Indeed."

" You will give me a little time to make myself agreeable to her, surely, Mr. Goldburg ?"

" How long ?"

" I can't say exactly. How is it possible for me to tell, how long it may take to make an impression on Miss Goldburg ?"

" Very true ; however, I cannot give you longer than a week ; make the most of it. This day week, then, we shall see how you have sped."

" Are you going to leave London, Mr. Goldburg ?"

" That is nothing to you ; and now let me advise

you, while I think of it, not to be too particular : make your visits short."

" But, Mr. Goldburg," I remonstrated, " how would that be making the most of my time ?"

" You may come frequently, say once a day, but don't bore her by sitting here by the hour. I hardly think you will care to be invited to dinner again ?"

I was actually on the point of uttering an eager " Oh no !" but fortunately I checked myself in time, and replied I had no wish to intrude.

" That's well ; keep to that, and you will do."

It was well that a thundering knock at the outer door prevented me from speaking just then, for I do not think I was going to say anything very conciliatory. Mr. Goldburg looked at the door, waited a moment or two, and then started up to pull the bell.

" Well, Mary, who was it ?"

" The gentleman who was here last night, sir, please."

" Oh ! And you have shown him upstairs ?"

" No, sir ; he said he would call again at nine."

" What did you send him away for ? Who told you to do so ?"

He spoke so sharply, that poor little Mary looked ready to cry.

" I didn't send him away, sir ; he asked me if you

was alone, and I said No, you had a gentleman to dinner, and so he went away, and said—”

“ Ah, yes, said he would come again; very well, you may go.”

“ That girl is always blushing,” he added, as she almost ran out of the room. “ It is vapouring.”

I was so irritated by hearing of a gentleman who was to have been shown upstairs, that I could not exert myself any more to make the agreeable to Mr. Goldburg. As he pushed me the bottle for the third time, I took the liberty of remarking that I had drunk quite as much wine as I liked; and added, “ As Miss Goldburg was going to receive one gentleman, she can have no very great objection to receiving another, I should think.”

“ How do you know she was going to receive a gentleman?”

“ Why, did not I hear you say so?”

“ No, you did not,” he said, quite angrily. “ I asked if he had been shown upstairs, but I did not say my niece would receive him.”

“ I beg your pardon, I misunderstood.”

“ You did most stupidly misunderstand;” then, with a sudden change for the better, he rose from his chair and said, “ Now, *we* will go upstairs if you like.”

“ Come, he is not so bad after all,” was my reflection, as I started up to accompany him.

We ascended a spacious staircase, devoid of any carpeting whatsoever, and extremely uneasy I felt at the noise we made, for I feared Miss Goldburg would hear us coming, and get out of the way. On the second landing stood the obnoxious clock ; a door near it was ajar ; Mr. Goldburg pushed it open, and I had the satisfaction of seeing his niece, reclining in the corner of a very large old-fashioned sofa.

“Alice, did you send my letter?” inquired Mr. Goldburg.

“Oh dear me!”

“You forgot it, of course ; well, send the girl now, at once.”

“She is not in, uncle ; but I will send her directly she comes back.”

“No, I won’t trust you again ; the old woman shall go.”

Mr. Goldburg made everything in the room vibrate, as he walked to the bell-pull.

“Oh, stop him, Mr. Lookabout, pray stop him!” exclaimed Miss Goldburg, starting partially from her recumbent position.

Seeing her betray this unusual energy, I could do no less than seize Mr. Goldburg by the arm, just in time to prevent the bell from ringing. He looked both surprised and angry, but I did not care a wit for his looks just then.

“ You forget, uncle.”

“ Forget what ? ”

“ The woman, you know.”

“ What nonsense ! ” he exclaimed, shaking me off.

“ Well, it does not matter, I will go down to her ; ” and, to my great delight, Mr. Goldburg left the room. But I had run some risk to please her, and I must know why she had appealed to me. “ Why were you so afraid of his ringing the bell, Miss Goldburg ? ”

“ Because it would have killed me if it had been answered ! ”

“ A very good reason ; but why would it have killed you ? ”

“ Because I have never yet seen the poor woman.”

“ Dear me ! are you so alarmed at fresh faces ? ”

“ Oh no,” she answered, with the slightest possible little laugh. “ But I dare say you will think it great nonsense, as my uncle said just now, so I had better not explain.”

“ Pray do ; I am *sure* I shall not think it nonsense.”

“ Yes, you will ; but, however, I don’t mind if you do. I don’t know what the woman down stairs is like, and I never want to know ; it could do her no good, poor creature, and it would kill me, as I said just now.”

“ She is an object—deformed, I suppose ? ”

“ No, not deformed, they say ; but you may fancy

what she is, when I tell you she was run over by an omnibus."

"Indeed! and can she work?"

"Oh yes, poor woman; she has kept this house for years while we were away. She had been ill, and was on her way home from the hospital, when the accident occurred."

"How very sad. But, Miss Goldburg, as you are so sensitive, were you not shocked by the sight of Mr. Cote?"

She looked me full in the face, but she had not her spectacles on. Her voice was even lower than usual as she said,—"I never saw him till the day—you know what day I mean—when I fainted."

"Yes, yes—I know," said I, most willing to save her all unnecessary explanation, now that I had got her, as I thought, on this most interesting subject.

"I believe it was the sight of him, more than anything else, that made me faint."

"How very odd he should never have seen you before."

"He had seen me before."

"How could that be, if you had never seen him?"

Oh, that plaguy uncle! if he did not come in just as she was on the point of answering me. So intently was I attending to Miss Goldburg, that I had not heard him approach.

“I cannot find her, Alice,” he said, looking at the letter he held in his hand.

“Oh, then she is gone home, I suppose ; she does go, I believe, two evenings in the week.”

“Mr. Lookabout, perhaps you will post this for me ?”

“Why can’t you post it yourself,” I should like to have said.

“Well, here it is ; will you undertake to remember it ?”

“Oh, certainly, Mr. Goldburg. I suppose any time this evening will do ?”

“Any time is no time. I want it to go at once.”

“Well, uncle, Mr. Lookabout of course is going to enjoy this fine evening out of doors, so your letter will be in the post in ten minutes’ time, I dare say.”

“Yes, certainly,” I replied, in the vexation of my spirit. “As Miss Goldburg very justly observes, it is beautiful out of doors, and I only wonder you don’t think so yourself, Mr. Goldburg.”

“I do think so, Mr. Lookabout ; but rather damp for an old Indian like me.”

I did not attempt to shake hands with either of them, but, with a general bow, walked down stairs and let myself out of the house in a thorough passion. I had walked the length of two whole streets, before it occurred to me to look at the direction of the letter : it

was to a nobleman's address in London. What in the world could Mr. Goldburg be writing to him about? It was more than the ten minutes Miss Goldburg had fixed ere I could make up my mind to deposit this despatch in the post-office; then I returned to Rue Street, and watched for more than an hour. At last the clocks struck nine, and very soon after a man knocked at the door of No. 13. He was wrapped in a greatcoat, rather an unusual sight that warm evening. I was sure it was the very same rough brown thing I had seen the previous night. To see the man's face I was determined. I also walked up to the door. He turned round: it was Mr. Cecil Cote. Miss Goldburg's maid opened the door.

“Tell Mr. Goldburg I posted his letter, will you?” I said, and walked away. I did not care to wait and see how long he stayed. I returned straight back to my hotel, and wrote again to Mr. Crone, informing him that Mr. Cecil Cote was in London, and I also informed him of the letter Mr. Goldburg had given me to post. This done, I sat up half the night, thinking chiefly about Miss Goldburg and myself. I was so puzzled as to the state of my feelings, that to ascertain whether I cared most for her, or the discovery of who shot her, I was obliged to have recourse to this test,—“Mr. Thorn said he would speak if she died.” No—I decidedly shrank from the idea even of knowing all,

at the cost of her life. But, then, should I ever have made my offer, but for the lurking hope of discovering all she knew? I think not. I could only come to the conclusion, that as I had secured a week's visiting in Rue Street, I would make the best of it, and trust to chance for the rest. Accordingly I made my appearance there about noon the next day, and found Mr. Goldburg absorbed in the newspaper, while his niece sat mending his glove. "I hope you received my message last night, Mr. Goldburg?" I said.

"What message?"

"Why, that I posted your letter safely."

"Indeed; who did you send it by?"

"Miss Goldburg's maid."

"Oh yes, uncle, I forgot to tell you that Mr. Lookabout called again to leave that message."

"A very unnecessary trouble, Mr. Lookabout."

"Oh, I did not come out of my way; but I should have asked Mr. Cecil Cote to deliver it, if he had condescended to recognize me."

Mr. Goldburg dropped his newspaper, and looked very sternly at me; Miss Goldburg looked more at her uncle than me. She seemed about to say something, but he checked her by asking impatiently, if she had finished his glove.

"Why, uncle, you have only just given it me. Do you want to go out?"

“ Yes ; no, not yet,” he added, with a look at me.

“ Very well, then there is no great hurry,” she observed, threading a fresh needle.

I had noticed a little snapping sound just as I mentioned Mr. Cecil Cote, so I suppose she had broken one needle on that hard glove.

Mr. Goldburg went on with his newspaper, and she stitched in a very lingering fashion, till I was quite out of patience with both,—with him for not going away, and with her for attending so listlessly to my conversation : to be sure, I don’t think it was very interesting, but how could a man be amusing in such a disadvantageous position ? At last I gave up all hope of sitting Mr. Goldburg out, and rose to take my leave : he immediately rang the bell, so that I found Miss Goldburg’s little maid at the foot of the stairs ready to show me out.

“ Did Miss Goldburg see the gentleman who came here last night ? ” I asked.

“ I don’t know, sir.”

“ Did he stay long ? ”

“ I don’t know, sir, for I didn’t let him out.”

“ She is a nice innocent little thing, and does not look at all suspicious at me,” I thought. “ Let’s try her again.”

“ He was here the night before last ; did he stay long, then ? ”

"Yes, sir, master let him out himself about eleven."

"Did Miss Goldburg see him?"

"No, sir, he was with master in the dining-room, and Miss Goldburg was upstairs."

I thought I heard steps on the landing above, so I hurried away, and thus ended my first day's courtship in Rue Street.

The second day I tried going at a different hour, but the inexorable uncle was there, and though he paced up and down the room by fits and starts, making everything shake, he never paced out of it. Miss Goldburg looked extremely well, but her fresh pink dress made the threadbare old furniture of the drawing-room she sat in, look extra dingy, and also very stiff; for Miss Goldburg's dress was always as carelessly arranged as her soft brown hair. I noticed, for the first time, a grand piano at one end of the room; so to make some sort of diversion, I asked her to play.

"Oh, the piano is dreadfully out of condition; it has not been tuned for years. Are you fond of music?"

Of course, as I had asked her for some, I was obliged to say, "Yes," but in reality I don't care a straw about it.

Soon after this, Mr. Goldburg grew so fidgetty, that I was obliged to depart, wondering how his niece could bear ways so opposite to her own.

The third day came, and with it a letter from Mr.

Crone, the contents of which stimulated my inquiring organ to a painful degree. He made no comment on either of my letters, but said, "I have received information which will require your presence here immediately. When I say that your coming will most probably expedite the discovery of Miss Goldburg's enemy, you will, I am sure, lose no time."

Here he ended. What was I to do? In a state of mind altogether inconceivable, I hurried to the Goldburgs for, at least, one more interview with the young lady I was daily getting to like better and better. The maid informed me Mr. Goldburg was busy with a gentleman.

"The same gentleman who was here the other evening, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, tell Miss Goldburg I am here—or stay, show me up at once, and don't disturb your master by telling him I am here."

I found Miss Goldburg in the drawing-room engaged on a book. She gave me a little surprised-look through her spectacles.

"My uncle is out, Mr. Lookabout."

"Are you sure he is, Miss Goldburg?"

"Oh yes, he went about half an hour ago, and I am sure I can't direct you where to find him."

"I have not the slightest wish to seek him, Miss

Goldburg ; but I don't think he is so far off as you imagine."

"Indeed ! then I suppose you have met him ?"

"No ; but your servant told me he was occupied with a gentleman."

"Ah, then, I suppose he changed his mind."

"Mr. Cote is a frequent visitor here, Miss Goldburg ?"

"Is he ?"

"You know he is."

"Mr. Lookabout is a frequent visitor also."

"Yes, Mr. Lookabout has an object in view ; so, of course, has Mr. Cote."

I kept my eyes fixed upon her, not to lose the slightest confusion, this speech of mine might cause her to show ; but she was imperturbable.

"My uncle's object at present, is to find some employment, and Mr. Cote's object, I have no doubt, is to help him in the search."

"What sort of employment does your uncle want ?"

"Anything befitting a gentleman."

"I wonder he has never mentioned it to me."

"My uncle does not speak of his affairs to strangers."

"Mr. Cecil Cote has the advantage of being an intimate friend, then ?"

"Of my uncle's ; yes."

“And is he not a favourite of yours?” She was silent. “You don’t answer me, Miss Goldburg.”

“Do you answer when you are asked impertinent questions, Mr. Lookabout?”

“I beg your pardon, I had no idea my question could be ranked with impertinent ones.”

“Well, I believe you; I think you are too obtuse to discover when you transgress.”

“You are very severe, Miss Goldburg.”

“You provoke severity.”

“How unfortunate I am. My whole desire is to win your favour.”

“Really! You are singularly unfortunate, indeed, in the means you take.”

“If I could but find a clue to your good graces.”

“My goodness and my graces being so hard to discover, I would not take the trouble, if I were you, Mr. Lookabout.”

I was about to pay her some foolish compliment, but was interrupted by the unexpected entrance of Mr. Goldburg, and Mr. Cecil Cote.

“And so you are here again, Mr. Lookabout?” was the former’s salutation.

Mr. Cote urbanely advanced to shake hands with me, and I detested him from that moment, for the act conveyed the unpleasant feeling to my mind, that he was not in the slightest degree jealous. That he

was a suitor of Miss Goldburg's, I had taken for granted.

"Have you heard from Mr. Crone lately?" were the first words he addressed me with.

"Yes, I have."

"I hope he is quite well; he has not been equally communicative with me."

This reminded me that Mr. Crone had enjoined strict silence on the subject of his letter, or I dare say I should have indulged myself in hinting at the contents, without wholly gratifying any curiosity I might thereby awaken.

"Will you take some luncheon?" inquired Mr. Goldburg, not addressing me, but Mr. Cote exclusively.

"Yes, thank you, I *will* stay and lunch with you."

Mr. Goldburg rang the bell. Mr. Cote cut us all out in conversation; the fluency with which he expressed himself was really wonderful. You could hardly tell who he was addressing, so rapidly did his eyes shift from one person to another, but occasionally he would end a speech with "Don't you think so, Miss Alice?" He seldom, however, received a response. While Mr. Goldburg carved a joint of cold meat which had been placed on the table, I took advantage of a slight pause, to ask Mr. Cote how long he intended staying in London.

“Oh, not long; it is getting slow now; don’t you think so, Mr. Lookabout?”

“Certainly, for fashionables; but I don’t pretend to be one.”

“And so you are going to stay awhile longer, are you?”

“My movements are very uncertain,” I replied.

There is one great disadvantage attendant on queries; they are sure to bring a return charge upon you.

“One would think they depended on a woman, Mr. Lookabout?” returned Mr. Cote, showing a row of brilliant white teeth.

“Why so?”

“Oh, surely, you don’t require an explanation of a joke.”

“I can’t see the joke at all, Mr. Cote.”

“I dare say not. Miss Alice, what will you take?”

“Nothing.”

“You must allow me to give you a biscuit, a glass of wine, anything.”

“I seldom take luncheon, as you know. Uncle, I think you had better have had it down stairs.”

She spoke this in a peculiarly grave tone, and though her gaze was the only one that never seemed to irritate Mr. Goldburg, he now looked, not annoyed, but confused.

“Yes, I think so,” he muttered, and ringing the bell again, ordered the servant to carry away all the eatables to the dining-room.

“Come, Cote, my niece does not like the smell of meat when she is not eating.”

Mr. Cote, with an air of extreme astonishment, followed Mr. Goldburg down stairs. Miss Goldburg, when they were gone, looked up—

“Well, and why don’t *you* go?”

“Your uncle did not invite me.”

“Oh, he meant to do so; it was only an oversight.”

“Let me take advantage of it, then.”

“Look,” she said, pointing to the floor, “they have dropped a fork; take advantage of that, and join them at lunch?”

“Why will you banish me, Miss Goldburg?”

“Listen, my uncle is calling you.”

So he was, in a sharp, ringing voice, that appeared to come from the bottom of the stairs. There was nothing for it but to go.

“Well, Miss Goldburg, I suppose I *must* go now; but I shall return after lunch.”

“Just as you please,” she replied, and I went.

Mr. Cote was not so talkative during luncheon as he had been upstairs, and immediately we had done, he proposed going out to Mr. Goldburg, who agreed,

saying he would just run up first, and tell his niece to put off dinner an hour later.

“ You find this an agreeable house to visit, Mr. Lookabout? ” remarked Mr. Cote.

“ So do you, I suppose, ” was my reply.

“ Why the house is not a very agreeable one—not pleasantly situated, you know ; but then Mr. Goldburg is such a very great friend of mine, that I don’t mind coming out of my way to see him.”

“ Confound his hypocrisy.” Did he think he could make me believe he came for Mr. Goldburg ?

“ By the way, have you ever met Mr. Thorn here, Mr. Lookabout ? ”

“ Have you, Mr. Cote ? ”

“ No.”

“ Well, then, how can I have met him here ? ”

“ Why, I have only run up to London for a day or two, whereas you seem to have established quite a footing in the house.”

“ You forget what a short time it is, since Mr. Goldburg has been in town.”

“ Very true ; they were staying at Dover, were they not ? Well, you may have met Mr. Thorn there ; it is just the same thing.”

“ Is Mr. Thorn wanted, that you inquire so particularly after him ? ”

“ Particularly ? Oh dear no, I don’t want him ; no

one wants him, that I know of; I merely started Mr. Thorn for something to say. Have you seen the papers to-day?"

"I am quite ready," said Mr. Goldburg, putting his head in at the door.

"Oh, are you?" replied Mr. Cote, starting up and giving a slight jerk to the loosely tied black silk strip that displayed so much of his throat. "Good morning, Mr. Lookabout," and once more he offered his hand, but this time I would not see it.

"Well, you are going, are you not?" commanded, rather than inquired, Mr. Goldburg.

"I will go up and wish Miss Goldburg good morning first."

"You may save yourself the trouble, for she is no longer in the drawing-room," replied Mr. Goldburg, opening the street-door and waiting for me to pass out; when I had done so, he and Mr. Cote followed, and we went our opposite ways.

The next day being Sunday, I did not call in Rue Street till after morning service, and I was told that Mr. and Miss Goldburg had gone out of town the previous night, and would not be home till the next morning. "Well, Mr. Goldburg must add an extra day to the week to make up for this," I said to myself. Meantime, as I had taken no notice of Mr. Crone's letter, I lived in uneasy expectation of something either

by telegraph or post. Monday morning I went to Rue Street early, and found the Goldburgs had not returned, but were momentarily expected. I desired the maid to show me into the dining-room, that I might wait, and also be ready to see them the moment they arrived. The room being unfortunately at the back, I was out in the hall whenever I heard cab wheels, which being pretty frequently the case, I at last took up my position as sentinel at the foot of the stairs. In about half an hour, a cab really did stop at the door, and I had the satisfaction of helping Miss Goldburg out of it.

“Well, Mr. Lookabout, you *are* an early visitor,” exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, who seemed in unusual good humour. Miss Goldburg slowly ascended the stairs. I was going after her, but Mr. Goldburg arrested me. “A few words with you,” he said, drawing me into the dining-room.

“My niece has inquired why you come here so often, Mr. Lookabout.”

“And you have told her, of course?”

“Yes, I have.”

“What does she say?”

“Nothing very flattering. It is well you have never made the offer, I thought you intended to make.”

“You have never given me an opportunity; you know that, Mr. Goldburg.”

“ Well, you ought to be very much obliged to me, instead of flushing up in that angry manner.”

“ I think I have a right to be angry, Mr. Goldburg ; I consider you have used me very unfairly. The fact is, you don’t wish me to marry your niece, and you had better have said so honestly at once.”

“ On the contrary, Mr. Lookabout, it would be my interest to marry my niece as soon as possible.”

I could return no answer to this, so I only looked at him.

“ You may as well sit down,” he said, “ and I will treat you more candidly than you deserve.”

I seated myself, but he remained standing, one hand thrust in the breast of his coat.

“ You see I have received the promise of a very good place as secretary to a nobleman, and, of course, it would be better for me not to have my niece to take care of.”

I felt an irresistible desire to clear my throat, which made his eyes sparkle up in a way that should have warned me, but I was beyond caution.

“ Yes ; and I see how it is, Mr. Goldburg, you have a more eligible suitor in your eye than Peter Lookabout.”

“ Who d’you mean, sir ?”

“ Mr. Cecil Cote.”

“ Sir, if you mean to insinuate,” began Mr. Gold-

burg wrathfully, but stopped, and turning his back to me, looked out of the window, muttering to himself, "It's not worth while, the man's a fool!"

"Not such a fool as you suppose, perhaps, Mr. Goldburg."

"Eh!" he exclaimed, turning round npon me. "Now, look here: I believe you have the vanity to think that I alone stand in your way. Shall I tell you what my niece said, or would you rather hear it from her lips?"

"From her lips, most decidedly," I exclaimed, starting up.

"Very well; then go upstairs, and, I dare say, you will find her in the room over." He raised his eyes to the ceiling and waved his hand towards the door. I was off on the instant. Miss Goldburg had apparently dropped on the sofa without even unloosening her bonnet; she turned slightly as I entered, saying, "I am tired." She looked at me. I looked at her, and seated myself on a chair, about a couple of yards from her.

"I was up very early this morning."

"Were you?"

She took out her spectacles, looked at me through them, and then quietly remarked, "I think you will find my uncle better company, Mr. Look-about."

“I don’t think so. In fact, I come by Mr. Goldburg’s special permission.”

“Indeed! that is very thoughtless of him.”

“Very thoughtful you mean, Miss Goldburg.”

She removed her bonnet and let it drop on the floor, then took off her spectacles and let them fall inside it. I felt a kind of confusion coming over me, which I had never before experienced, and instead of dashing into my subject, was foolish enough to make this preliminary remark,—“I want to speak to you, Miss Goldburg.”

“Pray don’t,” she answered quickly.

“But I must. Why mayn’t I?”

“Because I don’t wish it.”

“Your wishes I will always attend to; but now—your uncle told you—What do you say to it—to me, I mean?”

“Please to attend to my wishes now, and be silent, or rather—better still—go away.”

This summary dismissal! It was very hard. Had I been very awkward? What had I done? I could only mutter, “Don’t you like me, Miss Goldburg?”

“Like you!” she repeated, in such a tone of surprise and incredulity, that I felt more confused than ever, and not a little irritated.

“Your uncle prepared me for an unfavourable reception, but—”

“He did?” she broke in. “Then how can you give me all this trouble?”

She took a long breath and pushed back her hair, which symptoms of weariness, I however disregarded.

“He did not exactly tell me what you said, Miss Goldburg, and I wished to know it from yourself; I think I have a right to that at least.”

“Pray can you tell me why?”

Her coolness made me, I fear, quite savage in my tones, as I replied,—“I pay you the greatest compliment I can, so I should think a civil answer, is not too much to claim.”

“It does not strike you then, that I may regard your compliment in a different light?”

“I can’t see how a lady can regard an offer of marriage, as anything else but a compliment.”

“In some cases it is *anything* but a compliment. But really uncle should have saved me this trouble.”

She was rising.

“Well, Miss Goldburg, I thought you would have treated me with more courtesy.”

“I cannot treat an insult with courtesy.”

“An insult!” I exclaimed; and the idea crossed my mind, that notwithstanding her extreme calmness, she might be affected in the same manner as her uncle.

“Yes, an insult,” she repeated, deliberately; “to

suppose that I could do more than just be aware, that such a person as Mr. Lookabout existed. I could hardly fail to do *that*, considering how he forced the fact on my notice."

She made a movement to get past me, as she uttered this pleasant little speech in the calmest of tones ; but in the discomfort of my feelings, I had risen, and laid one hand with such impetus on the table, that, being on castors, it rolled away from me, and completely barricaded that aggravating little creature. There was but a narrow passage between it and the fireplace, which I blockaded, unless she jumped over the back of the sofa, which, considering her habits, was not likely ; I had her in a fix.

" You must just hear me say a few words, Miss Goldburg. I never flattered myself I had made the slightest impression, I assure you."

" Really ! I thought you vain, but this exceeds everything."

" What ?" I said, very roughly.

" Why, that you should rely on the mere offer of yourself, impressing me sufficiently to accept it. Take care of my bonnet, please."

I had nearly put my foot on it, as I drew back ; she stretched her hand, and pulled the bell-rope, which I had entirely overlooked. Mr. Goldburg in person answered it, and so quickly, that I had not had time

to say a word. Perhaps it was my fancy, but I thought a gleam of satisfaction came over his face as he looked at me.

“Alice, my dear, what were you doing just now?”

“Nothing, uncle,” she answered, picking up her bonnet.

“Well, I hoped you had quite recovered your fatigue, as I heard you so unusually active with the furniture.”

“Oh dear, uncle, you never thought it was me, surely? It was Mr. Lookabout; gentlemen never can sit quiet, you know; they must be doing something with their hands.”

This last speech of hers I heard as I left the room. Mr. Goldburg followed me.

“Well, Mr. Lookabout, I am sorry for you. I am afraid she did not soften it. You had better have trusted me.”

I took no notice of him.

“I dare say you think my niece rather peculiar in her notions, but it can’t be helped, I fear. Allow me to open the door for you.”

As he said this, he darted past me, and politely bowed me out. Now I think nothing can speak more for my candour, than the exact manner in which I have related my mortifying rejection. I don’t believe there is one man in a thousand, but would have glossed

it over. I, however, do as I would be done by, in fully satisfying any curiosity that may have been felt, on the subject of my proposal to Miss Goldburg. On my return home, I found an angry letter from Mr. Crone, which compelled my instant departure.

SIXTH JOURNEY.

MR. CRONE's man-servant must have been on the watch for me, as I had no sooner stepped from the railway carriage at my journey's end, than he accosted me.

"Master wishes to see you directly, sir," said he, touching his hat.

"Where shall I find him?"

"At the club, sir."

I hastened away, and was not very well pleased to see that the man followed me.

Mr. Crone, too, appeared to be looking out for me, as I met him on the threshold of the house to which I had been directed.

"So here you are at last. Come, then."

He took me by the arm, and hurried me away through several streets.

"The Goldburgs in Rue Street, still?" was the first question asked by him.

"Yes; but tell me where we are going, and at such a pace too."

“Never mind ; a good walk will do you good after your journey. You don’t look very well, Mr. Lookabout ; smoke-dried, I think. What is it ? London air ?”

I made no reply to these queries, neither did he await any, for we had reached the gunsmith’s shop—connected in my mind with Mr. Goldburg—and here Mr. Crone stopped.

“Walk in, please,” he said, giving me a slight push, as I hesitated a moment, wishing to ask a question.

Mr. Crone cleared his throat loudly. The shop was dark, but I could see a middle-sized, white-headed man emerge from the back part.

“Is it ?” said Mr. Crone.

The man approached nearer, looked fixedly in my face, and answered :—

“No.”

“Sure ?”

“Quite.”

I could not but suppose that this laconic dialogue concerned myself ; so, turning to Mr. Crone, I requested to know what they meant.

“Never mind, my good sir ; it is all right. Good morning.” Mr. Crone nodded to the owner of the shop, and drew me out with him.

“Now then, I think you had better come and dine with me, Mr. Lookabout. I can’t go home this

evening, so I have ordered dinner at the hotel, and I dare say we shall find it quite ready."

"You have something to tell me, have you not, Mr. Crone?"

"Yes, yes ; all in good time."

"Why did you take me to that shop?"

"You shall know by-and-by."

"I could tell you something about it, but I suppose you know."

"What? what could you tell me?" inquired Mr. Crone, glancing very keenly at me.

"Oh, never mind, you shall know in good time ; by-and-by, Mr. Crone."

He laughed a little.

"Well, well, after dinner we may be in more confiding humours, Mr. Lookabout. Here we are."

Mr. Crone had certainly provided a most tempting little dinner, and I believe we both did it full justice ; for, as the pudding was placed on the table, Mr. Crone observed,—"You have not quite lost your appetite, I see. I suppose you don't feel so bad as you look."

At last we were left by the officious waiter, to enjoy our dessert in peace. Mr. Crone, I felt sure, was turning something over in his mind ; perhaps considering how far he should confide in me.

"Now, Mr. Crone, you have brought me down here, I expect to know all about it."

"All about what?"

"Come, you know; but I think I know what the information is you said you had received."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Crone, sipping his wine.

"Yes; you have heard that Mr. Goldburg went to that shop."

Mr. Crone started.

"You knew that?"

"Yes."

"Why did you keep it secret, then?"

"Perhaps I did not think it sufficiently important to mention."

"You ought to have done so; but what else do you know?"

"It is but fair *you* should impart a little information now, Mr. Crone. Don't let me monopolize."

"Do you know what Mr. Goldburg did in the shop?"

"Bought a pistol, perhaps. Has it been found?"

"No; I see you know nothing more."

Mr. Crone smiled, as if in pity of my ignorance.

"Do you know what Mr. Goldburg did *after* being in that shop, Mr. Crone?"

"Do you, Mr. Lookabout?"

"Yes."

Mr. Crone waited about a minute, and then impatiently exclaimed,—“Well, and what did he do?”

“If you know, Mr. Crone, you may as well tell me; and if you don’t know, why, then, I had best leave you to find it out.”

“If you are afraid of implicating Mr. Goldburg, I can just tell you, Mr. Lookabout, that you have done so irremediably, so you may as well go on.”

It was my turn to start

“What do you mean, Mr. Crone?”

“I mean that I was not aware Mr. Goldburg went to the gunsmith’s, until you told me.”

“To be sure not!”

I could have thrown something at him across the table, as he sat regarding me with that complacent smile.

“But, Mr. Crone, you knew something. I suppose you took me there for identification?”

“Just so.”

“Then the gunsmith himself did not know?”

“No; and as you were not the man, I was at a loss until you so kindly enlightened me. But I did not much think it would turn out to be you.”

“I wonder you could ask me to come down with such a purpose in view.”

“Very impudent, eh!” Mr. Crone laughed as he

leant back in his chair, and whisked his napkin at a fly. "But you may be easy, for Mr. Goldburg is the person my suspicions were falling upon ; and I was going to consult you, how we could contrive to get him down for identification ; now that trouble is spared."

"And what shall you do ?" I asked.

"I can't tell yet. I shall be better able to decide, when you have told me what he did after leaving the shop."

"He walked straight to Cote Hall."

"How do you know ?"

"Because I followed him."

"Why did you follow him ?"

"I had a mind to see where he lived."

"Pooh ! you must have had a reason for following him. What was it ?"

"'Pon my word, Mr. Crone, I had no other reason than that I have stated. Now tell me what he did in the shop."

"Was there nothing he did on his way to Cote Hall ?"

"Nothing, I assure you, Mr. Crone."

"But what on earth made you follow him, then ? You led me to suppose you did not know the Goldburgs at all."

To satisfy the man, and get him to communicate, instead of extracting facts, I told him how I met with

the Goldburgs; but I found it hard to make him believe, that nothing but curiosity took me to Cote Hall, the second time.

“And now, Mr. Crone, you owe me something; so speak out what you know.”

“Very well; I will begin by telling you, that the gunsmith came to me a few days ago, and told me that since he had heard of the attempt on Miss Goldburg’s life, he had often thought he ought to mention that a gentleman came to his shop, a short time before, with a pistol, which he left to be repaired; he said he would call for it in a week.”

“And did he?”

“No, not himself; but another gentleman called for it.”

“When? *after* that unfortunate day?”

“Two days before.”

“And did not the smith know the gentleman?”

“He says not; neither can he tell exactly how many days intervened, between the coming of the first gentleman and the second; but he is sure that more than a week passed. However, that is not material.”

“If it was, I could inform you, Mr. Crone.”

“Indeed! do you remember the date of the day you first met Mr. Goldburg?”

“I don’t remember it, but as I transacted some

business on that day, no doubt I shall find a memorandum in my pocket-book."

"Look then."

I drew it out. "The 29th of June, Mr. Crone."

"Really! the smith said it was towards the end of the month. Then it was only a fortnight before Miss Goldburg was shot."

"Exactly a fortnight."

"There is the second gentleman to be identified."

"Which will be difficult."

"Not so very difficult."

"Do you suspect anyone, Mr. Crone?"

"Do you?"

"No; but it must have been a friend of Mr. Goldburg's, I should think."

"Yes, and he has not many, I fancy."

"Could it be Mr. Cecil Cote?"

"No, the smith knows him; he knows Mr. Forrester also, and it was not him."

"Mr. Thorn? Does the smith know him?"

"No, he does not; and we must get Mr. Thorn to enter that shop, somehow, Mr. Lookabout."

"But how is that to be done, Mr. Crone? I have not the slightest idea where he is."

"Miss Goldburg said he was not in England, but I doubt if she is to be relied on."

"Do you think she would say what was not true?"

“ Well, I won’t go so far as that ; but women, at best, are prevaricating creatures.”

“ I can’t see any way of getting at Mr. Thorn.”

“ You must get back to London, Mr. Lookabout, and do your best to find out where he is.”

“ Indeed, Mr. Crone, I must decline the job.”

“ How ? Something to be found out, and Mr. Lookabout in a giving-up mood ? Impossible ! ”

“ You don’t consider how peculiar Mr. Goldburg is.”

“ Touched, isn’t he ? ” Mr. Crone tapped his forehead.

“ Touched and touchy, too.”

“ I suspected the first, and have had experience of the second ; but you, I thought, had become quite intimate with him.”

Mr. Crone stared very rudely at me as he said this.

“ Intimate or not, I am not going to intrude myself upon him, and it would be to no purpose. By-the-by, Mr. Cecil Cote was asking me about Mr. Thorn. Does he know of the gunsmith’s visit to you ? ”

“ No, I have not seen him since ; and I told the man to hold his tongue for the present.”

The door opened as Mr. Crone concluded the sentence, and a voice said,—“ I say, Crone, have you forgotten the meeting ? ”

“ Why,” exclaimed Mr. Crone, “ that is Cecil Cote himself. Come in.”

"No, I can't stop a minute. I've a better memory for my engagements than you. Come down from town on purpose to attend it."

Mr. Cote showed his row of brilliant white teeth, as he laughingly popped his head in at the door.

"Hallo, Mr. Lookabout, you here; coming to the meeting, too?"

"Yes, come along," said Mr. Crone, rising.

"No, thank you, I'm tired."

"Come, Crone, make haste," cried Mr. Cote, from the hall, and I was left alone.

I am not going to enter into a minute description of my feelings, but if ever that troublesome organ in my head slumbered, it did so after my talk with Mr. Crone. In fact, I was thoroughly depressed; so rare an occurrence with me, calls for this much notice. If anyone had asked me what I thought of Miss Goldburg, I should have answered that I hated her; but I believe I was loving her all the time. I really do. There, that's quite enough about how I felt. Early in the morning, I was summoned from my bed to see Mr. Crone.

"Ah, Mr. Lookabout, I was beginning to grow impatient. How came you to have overslept yourself this fine morning?"

"You can have had no sleep at all, Mr. Crone."

"Not much. I have already been to Mr. Thorn's

place, and found it all shut up: no information to be got there. So now you must go back to London, Mr. Lookabout, you really must."

"But what can I do when I am there?"

"Why, you must frighten Miss Goldburg into telling where her lover is."

"Lover! You forget; he is not her lover now."

"I don't forget, Mr. Lookabout; for that tells more against Mr. Thorn than anything. You must not say a word of this pistol business; only tell her it will go hard with her uncle, if Mr. Thorn does not appear, and see what she says to that."

"Why don't you write to her, Mr. Crone?"

"No, no, that won't do; she'd take no notice of a letter."

"Why don't you go up yourself?"

"I can't, I'm too busy; and besides, you are better qualified, you know more of her."

"But she has always got her uncle at her elbow."

"Oh, nonsense; you can watch him out. I won't hear another difficulty, so don't make one."

"How very eager you are in this affair, Mr. Crone!"

"To be sure I am. Do you think it is pleasant to know that there is a person, perhaps a neighbour, who could shoot at a girl like that, and remain undetected? We are none of us safe, Mr. Lookabout."

"I perfectly agree with you, Mr. Crone, and I'd do anything almost to get to know who did it; but—"

"No more 'buts.' Be off this very day—now."

"Very well," I said, desperately, and, after a few more words, we parted; but he turned back to say, "Mind, not a word of the gunsmith; they must have no time given them to concoct a plausible story. Good-by."

And thus it came to pass I was once more in the train, London bound. By the time I reached that city, I had nearly persuaded myself that I had been hasty; that I had no cause to despair; after all, Miss Goldburg had only refused me on the ground of too short an acquaintance: I had only to persevere, and that objection would be done away with. At any rate, I had an excuse for entering her house again, and perhaps I might elicit something. If I had persisted in my refusal, Mr. Crone might have suspected the truth, and that I could not have borne. No, I would see Miss Goldburg at any risk, just once more.

SEVENTH JOURNEY.

AND I did see her. At ten o'clock in the morning, Mr. Goldburg, drawing on his gloves, sped along the street, reached a thoroughfare, hailed an omnibus and was gone, I hoped for a long time.

Miss Goldburg was not at home. I pleaded urgent business; Miss Goldburg was engaged; I sent up a little note prepared for this occasion; the answer was, Miss Goldburg would see me for a few minutes in the dining-room. I must say this in her favour, she did not keep me waiting long, but she neither asked me to sit down, nor did she sit herself.

“Miss Goldburg, you may think how extremely disagreeable it is for me, to have to intrude upon you again, but you are threatened with great annoyance, and you can hardly find fault with me for trying to warn you of it.”

“Your note says my *uncle* has got into trouble.”

No, not exactly that, but something has been discovered about him which *will* bring him into trouble, unless Mr. Thorn makes his appearance.”

“Nothing can be discovered *against* my uncle, Mr. Lookabout; but I must request you will not annoy him on this, or any subject.”

“I have nothing to say to it, Miss Goldburg; but Mr. Crone will not scruple to annoy him, unless Mr. Thorn is produced.”

“What has he to do with it?”

“He can exculpate Mr. Goldburg, I believe.”

“Exculpate? What do you mean?”

She leant her hand on the table. I reached a chair.

“I don’t want to sit down,” she said, as though I had done her an injury.

“We know that your uncle is very excitable, and that is why we wish to see Mr. Thorn quietly, when, no doubt, everything would be explained.”

“But what is there to be explained? My uncle is nervous—perhaps a little excitable—with such people as—as—Mr. Crone, who are always in a fuss; but if you will tell me what you want, I can explain it to him quietly.”

“We want Mr. Thorn; I assure you, Miss Goldburg, there is no other way of sparing your uncle.”

“I do not know where he is.”

“Really?”

“Do you doubt my word?” she said, haughtily.

“No, oh no, not for a moment; but you said he was

not in England, so I supposed you might know where a letter would reach him."

"I could, perhaps, ascertain where he is, if you give me sufficient time, but don't tease my uncle about it."

"Very well, and how long shall you take?"

"I can't say. I will send you his address if I can get it."

"If? There must be no 'if' in the case, Miss Goldburg," and, thinking I had found her weak point, I added, "I must speak to your uncle at once, unless you can *promise* me Mr. Thorn's address."

"Then you will probably have a great deal to answer for, Mr. Lookabout."

"Must I infer by your words, that what I have always thought, is really a fact?"

"What have you always thought?"

I had, at last, startled her a little.

"That your uncle is not sane."

I had the impression that she was suppressing the desire to take a long breath, as she replied,—"You are quite wrong—quite wrong—Mr. Lookabout. Very likely you have wormed out some story of his illness in India; but if you spread such a false report, or have done so, I will not bear your presence another minute; so go."

She went to the bell.

"Pray don't ring, Miss Goldburg, and don't be so

rash in your judgments. Mr. Crone thinks as I do ; he may have heard of the illness you speak of, I never have. Mr. Goldburg behaved like a madman to me on one occasion, but you are the first and will be the last to hear it."

She stood playing with the bell-rope.

" It should be a caution to you not to excite him, then. He had a brain fever caused by the horrors he witnessed. He was nervous, but never excitable before."

" Indeed, I am glad to have his peculiarities so accounted for. No doubt, they will wear off in time. Now, if you will tell me when to call again for Mr. Thorn's address, I won't trouble you any further."

She considered a little while.

" Not till the end of the week—perhaps Saturday."

" Very well, good morning."

" Good morning," she replied, and rang the bell ; but she recalled me. " Mr. Lookabout, wait a moment."

I was only too willing to do so, but I hope I looked reluctant.

" There is but one way of getting at Mr. Thorn, after all—through his banker, I mean. Is it positively necessary he should be written to ? "

I hesitated as she put it so ; for how could I bear to be the means of bringing back her old lover ?

“If you will give me his banker’s address, I will write to Mr. Thorn.”

“That I cannot do.”

“Then do you intend writing to him yourself?”

“Oh, no, not on any account,” she said quickly.

I was very much relieved by this reply, but she surprised me by adding, “My uncle *must* be told, I cannot do anything without his knowledge. He knows Mr. Thorn’s banker, and will write to him, perhaps; but you must leave it all to me.”

“Certainly, then I can come to-morrow to hear what Mr. Goldburg says.”

“Very well; the sooner it is over the better, only you must account for Mr. Thorn being wanted very differently—I mean, you must not say what you have said to me.”

“I will say he is wanted on county business.” I thought this rather a good solution of the difficulty, and expected at least her approbation, but she merely remarked,—“Just as you please, anything that is free from mystery will do. Good morning, again.”

She bowed and turned away. I found her little maid waiting patiently in the hall to let me out, but I had not a word to return for her curtsy.

I found time hang very heavy on my hands that day. I tried all sorts of things to pass it away; but I was restless, and nothing interested me. I wrote a

line to Mr. Crone to keep him quiet, and I asked him if he had ever heard the cause of Mr. Goldburg's eccentricity, as communicated to me by his niece. No time having been appointed for my visit to Rue Street, I went very early, and was told to call again in an hour; so I had to wander about the streets, and I don't think my temper was improved by the exercise. Having at last gained admittance, I found Miss Goldburg and her uncle together in the drawing-room, he reading from the newspaper, and she winding a skein of thread from off her own wrists. Mr. Goldburg, having his back to me, went on with what sounded like Indian news; but his low, half-pronounced, and jerked-out sentences were not easy to make out, and it is not to be supposed I took much pains to do so, though Miss Goldburg slightly bent her head with a look that said, "Don't interrupt him." I felt extremely awkward in my dumb, lay-figure-sort of position behind his chair. After awhile he came to an abrupt stop; and, laying the paper across his knees, said, "So you see, my dear, it arrived last night."

"Did it?" she replied, looking up from what appeared to my eyes a decided tangle.

"I have read it to you: its arrival—Liverpool—last night." He gave out this summary of information with his eyes fastened once more on the paper.

"Oh yes; I heard—the ship you mean, uncle?"

“What else could I mean?”

She gave a little smile, and I thought her lips had rather a nervous quiver in them; but it might have been my fancy.

“Mr. Lookabout is waiting to speak to you, uncle.”

“Where?” exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, starting round, just as I had expected he would do, when made aware of my presence. “So you are here again. Well, and what do you want?”

Afraid of committing myself, I looked beseechingly at Miss Goldburg.

“The newspaper has put it out of your head, uncle; you know I told you about it—Mr. Lookabout calling yesterday morning for Mr. Thorn’s address.”

“Yes; but what do you want it for?”

“There is some business that cannot be settled without him—county business, in which Mr. Thorn is concerned, I believe.”

“And what should I know of Mr. Thorn?”

“You know his banker, uncle; it would not be much trouble just to write him a line.”

“I told you, Alice, I would have nothing to say to it,” replied Mr. Goldburg, taking up the paper again.

“Might I ask the name of the banker, Mr. Goldburg?”

“Mr. Thorn very likely forgot that we knew his banker. We are not going to be responsible for a hue-

and-cry after him, are we, Alice?" He glanced at her as he spoke.

"Certainly not, uncle; but you might quietly let him know that he is wanted."

As Miss Goldburg said this she rose from her corner of the sofa and, laying her hand on the exact spot of the paper where her uncle's eyes appeared to be fixed, she added,—"You don't know of what consequence it might be to—to Mr. Thorn."

Mr. Goldburg looked up into her face with that horribly sudden extension of the eyelids so dreaded by me, but apparently disregarded by his niece. She spoke her next words quicker than usual, however. "I mean that Mr. Thorn might blame us for not, at least, apprising him that he is wanted."

"Again I ask what he is wanted for."

Miss Goldburg's skein, which had already dropped off one wrist, now slipped from the other, and, sliding down the newspaper, found its way between Mr. Goldburg's knees to the floor. She kept tight hold of the reel, and seemed to try and wind a little. All this time we were silent. I was conscious of a wish to be polite and pick up the skein, but I could not well do so on account of Mr. Goldburg's legs, and besides, after that look of his, I would as soon have accosted a lion. Miss Goldburg, out of all patience I suppose,

looked at me in such a manner as made my wandering wits exert themselves.

“ You see, Mr. Goldburg, gentlemen of Mr. Thorn’s consequence, are liable to be wanted—that is, desired ; in fact, his vote and interest would always make him inquired for.”

“ What, is there an election ? ”

I seized at the idea.

“ Something of that sort, I believe, Mr. Goldburg, but not talked of much yet.”

“ Well, as I said before, I’ll have nothing to say to it.”

Mr. Goldburg crossed his legs as he spoke and snapped Miss Goldburg’s thread.

“ Oh ! uncle ; what have you done ! ” she exclaimed, stooping down.

“ Done, my dear ? Nothing, that I know of.”

“ No, Mr. Goldburg, you are not aware of what you have done. Allow me to pick it up for you, Miss Goldburg.”

“ Oh, your thread ! ” exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, shaking his foot round which it was getting twisted. “ I am quite entangled ; pray set me free, Alice.”

“ Yes, if I can, uncle ; but don’t move about in that way, or you will make it worse.”

Having extricated her uncle, after several breakages of the thread, she returned to the couch ; and he, as if

to prevent any recurrence to the subject that had been under discussion, suddenly asked,—“ Why didn’t you tell Cecil where the key of your box is, Alice ! ”

“ Because I don’t want the key ; only the box.”

“ But I won’t hear of the trunk being broken open ; it is such a lock as is not often met with. Let me tell you, Alice, you are very nonsensical about it.”

I sat absorbed in hearing, and trying to understand what they were talking about.

“ Very likely you think me so, uncle ; but I’ll try to do without the contents of the box, until you can go for the key yourself.”

“ I have no intention of going ; and if you can do without the contents of the box, I can’t see why you should have been so anxious to have it.”

“ I am not anxious about it at all ; if I had been, I should have tried to get it before.”

“ Really, I think Cecil must think you suspect he might take a fancy to look over your clothes. What do you think, Mr. Lookabout ; is it likely ? ”

“ I can’t give an opinion, Mr. Goldburg, as I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“ We are talking about a box my niece left behind her at Cote Hall ; she left the key also, and won’t tell where it is.”

“ I suppose Miss Goldburg has her reasons,” I began, but Miss Goldburg interrupted me.

“ Mrs. Ursula promised to send the box ; you need not have mentioned it to Mr. Cecil Cote.”

“ Why don’t you tell Mrs. Ursula where the key is ; don’t you trust her ?”

“ I could not comfortably do so, uncle ; there are some letters in the box, and it would not be pleasant to ”—Miss Goldburg paused.

“ To trust anybody ; not even Mr. Lookabout here, eh ?” and Mr. Goldburg actually laughed for a second or so. It quite prevented me from offering my services.

“ Why can’t they send the box, uncle ; and when I have got it, I can tell Mrs. Ursula where the key is.”

“ Why give so much trouble, my dear ? Box and key had much better come together ; nailed under the direction card, it would be quite safe.”

“ If you get the box sent to you, I will gladly call for the key and bring it to you myself, Miss Goldburg.”

“ What, go down on purpose ?” asked she, opening her eyes, but so differently from her uncle ; they looked beautiful !

“ Yes, Miss Goldburg, on purpose, and with extreme pleasure.”

“ Will that suit you, Alice ?”

“ Thank you, Mr. Lookabout ; I’ll think of it.”

That was all I got for my pains. I began to fear I must take leave, but as I was about to do so, Mr. Goldburg rose and inquired which way I was going. I replied that I scarcely knew.

“If that is the case, we can start together, and part when you have made up your mind, Mr. Lookabout. By-the-by, Alice, Mr. Forrester returns to the country to-day; have you any message for Cecil?—I mean about the box.”

“No; none.”

“Then good-by.”

She nodded to him, and took up that nasty ravelled skein again, just as I was on the point of advancing to shake hands; so, for fear of a further repulse, I retreated with a bow, followed Mr. Goldburg down stairs, pondering over his affability, and whether it was likely to last.

We had scarcely got clear of the house, when Mr. Goldburg, turning sharp upon me, said,—“What do you mean to do about Mr. Thorn?”

Rather startled, I replied that I did not want him.

“No, I should think not; indeed, I can’t see what you have to do with county business, being a stranger.”

I felt a little nettled at this.

“Certainly, I have nothing to do with *your* county.”

“ My county ?” interrupted he. “ I have no county.”

“ Mr. Cote’s county, then ; but having been asked by a gentleman—” thinking this might indicate Mr. Crone and raise suspicion, I went on in the plural—“ some gentlemen, to inquire of you, as being a friend of Mr. Thorn’s, I—”

“ I am no friend of Mr. Thorn’s. I don’t like Mr. Thorn—I never did.”

“ Indeed ! I thought—”

“ Keep your thoughts to yourself ; don’t trouble me with them.”

We had reached a bustling spot, where conversation was nearly impossible.

“ No !” exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, turning abruptly into a quieter street ; “ you, of all people, should let Mr. Thorn alone, as you fancy yourself in love with my niece ; but perhaps you are cured now, are you ?”

He looked at me.

“ No, indeed, Mr. Goldburg ; I am sorry to say I am not.”

“ Well, don’t sigh ; I had rather *you* had her than Thorn.”

“ Really, Mr. Goldburg. Ah, but that does not signify, as she is so decidedly against me.”

“ If you like to try again, you can come occasionally and see me ; but on condition you don’t meddle and interfere to bring Mr. Thorn back again.”

‘ I have no desire to do so, Mr. Goldburg.’

“ Very well, then, don’t.”

“ If Mr. Crone could hear the contract we are making !” I said to myself.

“ Now, then,” said Mr. Goldburg, stopping short ; “ I am going to take a breath of fresh air yonder,” pointing to the Regent’s Park, “ before I go to Mr. Forrester.”

“ I should like some fresh air, too, amazingly, Mr. Goldburg.”

As he made no remark in reply, I followed him over the crossing, determined to stick by him and satisfy myself, if possible, of several things that I had long wanted to ascertain.

“ Is Mr. Forrester going to Cote Hall ?” I asked.

“ Not that I know of ; why do you ask ?”

“ Because you asked Miss Goldburg if she had any message for your relations.”

“ What relations ?”

“ The Cotes ; are they not related to you ?”

I had taken it for granted on a venture.

“ No, not to me.”

“ To Miss Goldburg, then, I suppose ?”

“ Yes.”

So far so well.

“ Your niece said something about them once that struck me as very odd.”

“What did she say?” he asked, half stopping.

“Why that she had never seen old Mr. Cote, but he had seen her. Now that was odd, wasn’t it, Mr. Goldburg?”

“Hum; she did not explain herself, then?”

“No.”

“And you want to know how it was, I suppose?”

“Well, I must say I do, Mr. Goldburg.”

“I don’t mind if I tell you; but no, if I told you how he saw her, you’d want to know what came before, and that would make a long story.”

“It could not be too long for me, Mr. Goldburg.”

“I dare say not, but it would be for me.”

“Anything interests me that concerns Miss Goldburg.”

“Or anyone else either. Well, well; it may be a warning to you not to be too desperately in love—but you are not likely to do what old Cote did; however, to begin with, her mother was a great flirt.”

“Miss Goldburg’s mother?”

“Yes, am I not speaking of my niece?” he said, testily.

“But she was related—”

“To Mr. Cote—yes, of course. I can’t tell you what degree of relationship exactly, some sort of cousinship; but, as I say, she was a *great* flirt. What made you contradict me?”

“ I didn’t contradict you, Mr. Goldburg.”

“ Yes you did ; you said, ‘ *but* she was related,’ as if that would prevent her from flirting.”

“ No, of course not ; I meant—”

“ Never mind what you meant. *I* ought to know, for she flirted with me as well—however, it did *me* no harm. Well, she married my brother at last, but that is superfluous information : they went to Germany.”

“ Yes,” I said, as he paused.

“ I heard nothing of them for a year or more ; then I came by some information in a way you would not guess.”

He walked on a little way quite silent. Fearful of irritating him as I was, I yet ventured to ask,—
“ How, Mr. Goldburg ?”

“ It came upon me all of a sudden—Mr. Cote had been found at the bottom of a precipice, some miles from his house. You know now how he came by his deformity.”

“ Did it happen soon after her marriage ?”

“ Soon ? No, I told you, long enough for him to have forgotten all about her, as I thought he had. When I got the news, of course, as we had been friends, I went to Cote Hall, and there I got the first news of my sister-in-law, from a letter young Cote had found in his father’s pocket.”

“ And what was it, Mr. Goldburg ?”

“ You may well open your eyes, Mr. Lookabout, and they’ll open wider still, as mine did, I fancy, when I saw that the purport of the letter, was to ask Cote to come over and be godfather to her son and heir—to nothing.”

“ Bless me !”

“ Yes, you may well bless yourself, Mr. Lookabout ; and so did I bless myself, for not having been such a fool as Cote.”

Mr. Goldburg shuffled his hat nearly off his head, as he spoke.

“ She said she wished to have him at the christening, as being the head of the family, and all that stuff. Well, we saw Cote through it, but you know what he is. After that I went to India.”

“ Mr. Cote was a widower, I suppose ?”

“ Yes ; his wife died when Cecil was born.”

“ And how did he come to see Miss Goldburg ?”

“ I am coming to that. Two years after three things happened,—the boy died, Alice was born, and my brother joined me in India.”

“ And did Mrs. Goldburg stay in Germany ?” I asked, to set him going again.

“ Yes, yes—but the rest I heard from Alice ; if you want to know, you must ask her—I have had enough of it. Suppose we turn back ; it is time I was at Forrester’s.”

"But Miss Goldburg will hardly speak to me. How can I venture to ask her?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"But, Mr. Goldburg, you are too bad ; you have not told me what relates to Miss Goldburg, the only thing I asked you."

"The only thing ? you have asked a dozen things, or more. Now, good morning to you ; I am going this way."

"So am I," was my quick rejoinder, but he went at such a pace that I could only have regained his side by a little run, which I feared would give offence, and to keep him in a good humour was of first importance. I had a great mind to go back to Rue Street, and ask Miss Goldburg on the spot ; but every step I took in that direction lessened my courage, and at last I gave up the idea for that day. My head was so full of what I had heard, that I found writing to Mr. Crone a difficult matter, but it was unavoidable, as I had promised to let him know the upshot of my morning's visit at once. I think I had better give my letter.

"DEAR MR. CRONE,

"I saw Mr. Goldburg this morning, but I am sorry to say, have nothing satisfactory to relate. Neither Mr. nor Miss Goldburg will tell

know, and what can I do? Don't you think we had better let him alone,—I mean Mr. T.? I assure you I did as much as man could do to get his address; *you* could not have done more, and I advise you to let the matter rest.

“ I remain,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ P. LOOKABOUT.”

Not without certain misgivings, did I commit this letter to the post. I did not know what to do about calling in Rue Street the next day. Mr. Goldburg had given me leave, but what would his niece think of my calling again so soon? In this doubt I let the morning wear away, but it was not very late in the day, when I had the good fortune of meeting uncle and niece in the next street to theirs.

“ So you did not find us at home, Mr. Lookabout ?”

“ I have not been to your house, Mr. Goldburg.”

“ But you are going now, I suppose ?”

“ If you are going home ?”

“ Yes—yes, we are. Now, Alice, *can't* you walk a little quicker.”

“ Why, uncle ?”

“ Why, why ? because you creep, you don't walk.”

“ You like to fly, uncle.”

“ Will you dine with us, Mr. Lookabout ?”

I am ashamed to confess that I hesitated ; the remembrance of that former dinner came *hotly* over me.

“Don’t, unless you like,” remarked Mr. Goldburg ; his niece had been trying to catch his eye, and I am quite certain she only succeeded by pressing his arm.

“What’s the matter, my dear?”

“Nothing, uncle,” she answered, flushing a little at his stupidity.

“I should be very happy to accept your invitation, Mr. Goldburg, if Miss Goldburg would second it.

I think this was turning my hesitation off neatly.

“Oh, you think a gentleman’s invitation goes for nothing, do you? Well then, keep away by all means.”

Mr. Goldburg knocked and rang at his own door as he spoke, and when it was opened, his niece went in, without taking the slightest notice of me.

“Stay, you can come in the evening,—if you choose, Alice. Alice, you’ll give Mr. Lookabout a cup of tea, won’t you?”

Her answer, if she made any, was too faint to reach my ears.

“Yes, she says she will—eight o’clock, remember. Good-by.”

Mr. Goldburg nodded to me, and shut the door. It is not to be imagined that I was not much irritated by this cool treatment, but I managed to smother my feelings ; for to keep away from Rue Street when

eight o'clock came, I found an impossibility. I did not hurry myself, however, and consequently Miss Goldburg was pouring out the tea when I entered her drawing-room. At a glance, I saw there were only two cups on the tray.

“Ah! you are come; ring the bell, then.”

This was Mr. Goldburg's welcome; he sat at one side the table, and pointed to the other, as he spoke; so I seated myself there.

“Give Mr. Lookabout my cup, Alice,” he said, as she was handing it to him.

“He can wait,” she replied, pressing it upon him; but he took the cup from her, and handed it across to me.

“Pray don't, Mr. Goldburg, here comes another cup.”

“Take it, I say.”

The tone was so peremptory, that in my hurry to relieve him of it, half the tea was spilt.

“How clumsy! That comes with nonsensical compliments.”

“Never mind, uncle.”

But she took off her spectacles. I wonder if it annoyed her to see the slop.

“Run for a cloth, Mary,” said Mr. Goldburg, looking round; but the nice little creature had already done so, and now wiped away indefatigably.

“How did you know we wanted a cup?” he asked her, handing the one she had brought, to his niece.

“I thought, please, sir, that the gentleman must be come to tea.”

“Thought! what business had you to think?—servants have *no* business to think.”

Mary, very much crestfallen, turned her duster about in search of a dry bit, and gave another dab at the table-cloth.

“There, there, that will do; and when next I ring the bell, don’t think.”

“No, sir;” and glancing at her mistress as if to see what *she* thought, Mary made her exit.

This uncomfortable little incident, destroyed even the small share of equanimity I could boast of possessing, in Miss Goldburg’s presence. Mr. Goldburg frowned over his tea in silence, and having despatched his first cup by a succession of rapid sips, he handed it back to his niece, who thereupon replaced her spectacles on her nose.

“Will you take another cup?” she asked, addressing me.

“Yes, if you please, thank you,” I replied, gulping what remained in my cup.

“Don’t hurry yourself.”

“Oh, but I am quite ready.”

She poured out her uncle's first, and then turned the cock of the tea-urn.

"My dear, the water comes very slow," remarked Mr. Goldburg, watching the meagre little stream that fell into the teapot.

"Quite fast enough, uncle."

"Yes, I dare say it is fast enough for you; anything is fast enough for you—a tortoise or a crab, you wouldn't see the difference between them and a race-horse."

"Oh yes, indeed I should, uncle; but I dare say race-horses would rather be crabs, sometimes."

"The tea-urn wants tilting, I think, Miss Goldburg."

"Thank you. Now, uncle, what do you say to that?"

"Hum—it comes a *little* quicker now. I wish you could be tilted, Alice."

She laughed, and handed me my tea. I felt more at my ease, and ventured to inquire if she did not find London a very uncongenial place.

"You mean on account of the bustle?"

"Yes, partly that, and partly—"

"The atmosphere," put in Mr. Goldburg. "Those are the two things connected by everybody with London. It is not likely *you* would suggest anything new, Mr. Leokabout."

“Why, you can’t suggest anything new yourself, Mr. Goldburg.”

“You are not going to quarrel about the merits of London, I hope,” said Miss Goldburg, smiling.

“I am going down stairs now, Alice. I forgot to pay that poor wretch her wages this morning. You won’t have her up here, I suppose?”

“Oh no, no, uncle; but can’t you send the money down by Mary?”

“No; I’ll pay her myself.”

When he was fairly out of the room, I lost no time.

“Miss Goldburg, your uncle was telling me some curious things this morning, and I was reminded of your saying that Mr. Cote had seen you, though you had never seen him.”

“Did I ever say so? What a memory you have!”

“I have often wished to ask you how it was. Will you tell me?”

“He is my godfather,” she replied, looking into her cup, as she gently stirred her tea.

“Your godfather!”

“Why not? Is it so extraordinary to have a godfather?”

“But I thought—dear, how very odd. How came he to be your godfather?”

“ By going through the ceremony at the font, I suppose. I don’t see any other way.”

“ No—but you don’t understand me;” but I was afraid to explain myself, not knowing how any allusion to her mother might be taken.

“ So deformed as he is,” I muttered.

“ Yes; I believe it was a great shock to my—to the people present, when he walked into the church.”

“ Unexpected?”

“ Yes; it was in Germany, and he was supposed to be at Cote Hall.”

“ And so he only saw you that once. Ah, yes, I see; and of course you could not see him.”

“ Well, I suppose I *did* see him, for I dare say my eyes were as good then as they have been since.”

“ Very true; but one never can imagine babies’ eyes are good for anything but crying.”

“ And that mine did plentifully, I believe; quite enough to disgust Mr. Cote with me, for life.”

“ Did he go away *immediately* after the christening?”

“ Yes; but why do you want to know so much about it?”

“ Because I feel interested in Mr. Cote, poor man.”

"Will you ring the bell?—that is, if you have done."

"Quite."

When the maid had cleared away, and was about to make her final disappearance, Miss Goldburg called to her. "Mary, tell your master to come upstairs before he goes out."

"Yes, miss."

"Will you poke the fire, Mr. Lookabout, please?" she said, establishing herself in the corner of the sofa, which I began to consider sacred to her alone.

"Is Mr. Goldburg going out?" I asked, after having, as I flattered myself, poked the fire to her satisfaction.

"I think it is not unlikely, and I feared he might forget he had a visitor."

"Never mind that, Miss Goldburg, I am most willing to be forgotten."

I was foolish to say this. She looked excessively grave. I hastened to remedy my mistake.

"Of course, I mean to say that I don't wish to be a tie to Mr. Goldburg, neither for a moment think I wish to obtrude myself on you. Perhaps you would like me to go at once?"

"Must I speak candidly or politely?" she inquired.

"Can you not combine the two?" I asked, having an instinctive dread of her candour.

“No.”

“Well, then, don’t speak at all; I cannot bear to hear you *say* you wish me gone.”

I walked to the door, not very fast; she had plenty of time to say something mitigating.

“Mr. Lookabout!”

She really was relenting; I quite started.

“Will you tell my uncle, on your way out, to remember the coals; he may not come up to me, perhaps?”

How could I make any reply to this? I fear I let the door shut after me, rather quicker than is customary in polite society. I groped my way down stairs in the dark, and had nearly succeeded in opening the front door, when Mr. Goldburg’s voice issued from somewhere.

“Hallo! is it burglars?”

“It’s me, Mr. Goldburg.”

“And what’s the matter, pray?”

“Nothing particular. Good night.”

“Well, you’ve a cool way of taking leave, I must say.”

“Miss Goldburg wishes you to remember the coals.”

“Oh, indeed. She is a chilly little mortal; they ought to have been in yesterday. But did you come down to tell me that? You have hit on the wrong door, then. Come here.”

I walked in the direction indicated by his voice, and as I turned the staircase, I saw a little light through the dining-room door, which stood a-jar. Mr. Goldburg was standing by the table: on it lay what looked like an account-book; a few bits of paper were prevented from straggling, by an ink-bottle, instead of a paper-weight.

“ You are busy, Mr. Goldburg; I had better go.”

“ Yes, I *am* busy, but tell me — I suppose she has declined satisfying your curiosity, and you are in a rage. Isn’t that it ? ”

“ No, Mr. Goldburg! your niece has told me what you said I might ask her.”

“ Well, then, what can you want more ? ”

“ Nothing.”

He smiled one of his wild melancholy smiles.

“ Her mother told her all that; Cote went to *that* christening uninvited. The sight of him sobered my sister-in-law, I believe.”

“ Did she continue to live in Germany ? ”

“ Yes; up to the time of her death, a few years ago. I took Alice out to India, then, to join her father.”

“ And he is dead, too ? ”

“ Yes; yes, he died soon after we arrived. I only wonder we are not dead too. And so you are going? Good night, then; you have been reasonable in your visit this evening.”

I had got into the hall again, when he darted after me.

“ I say, you must not come to-morrow ; I shall be out all day.”

As I made no reply, he called out, “ Do you hear ? ”

“ Yes, I hear ;” and if I had followed the impulse of the moment, I should have added, “ and I’ll never come again.” But I went away without another word. I will pass on at once to the letter I received from Mr. Crone, in answer to mine :—

“ Your letter, Mr. Lookabout, has made me determine on active measures. Mr. Goldburg has behaved just as I expected ; and, unless you wish me to consider you as an accomplice, you will come down without delay.

“ Yours,

“ J. CRONE.”

I did not relish this going to and fro, at the beck and call of Mr. Crone, yet I left London that very day ; but with the hope of returning fully informed as to what he intended to do with reference to the Goldburgs.

EIGHTH JOURNEY.

I PRESENTED myself at Mr. Crone's house: a good substantial abode, some distance from the town, and was shown at once into what appeared to be his own particular room. I may here say, that though I knew Mr. Crone to be a married man, I never, to my knowledge, caught a glimpse of his wife, neither could I ever make out from anybody what sort of a woman she was.

"Ah! that's you, is it? Take a chair," he said, putting aside the book he was reading. "It is well you are come, I can tell you, for I very much suspect you are gone over to the enemy."

"Who do yon designate as 'the enemy,' Mr. Crone?"

"You know."

"Indeed, I don't."

"Come, come, no nonsense with me. Look here." He handed me the 'Times,' pointing out to my notice the following advertisement:—"Mr. Courtney T——n is wanted at his home in Troutshire."

I was so taken by surprise, that I had not a word to say, for at least five minutes.

“ Ha, ha ! we shall see what that does, Mr. Lookabout. But I shan’t wait long. There is not a doubt on my mind, that Mr. Goldburg ought to be shut up in a lunatic asylum.”

“ Why, Mr. Crone, why ? ”

“ Why ? There are so many because to your why, that I hardly know which to begin with. But you have been the means of confirming the suspicion I have had for some time.”

“ How ? ”

“ Why, didn’t you find out Mr. Goldburg’s mind had been unsettled in India ? ”

“ Only a brain fever, Mr. Crone — *only* a brain fever.”

“ Yes, I dare say ; and in a slight return of this same brain fever, he took his niece for a sepoy, and had a crack at her.”

“ Oh, good heavens ! Mr. Crone—don’t say so.”

“ Just think about it, and see if you don’t come to the same conclusion.”

“ Indeed I don’t, Mr. Crone.”

“ Because you have not thought.”

“ Yes, I have. How *could* he shoot at his niece, when he was upstairs in the billiard-room,—don’t you remember ? ”

“ Yes, I remember everything perfectly, Mr. Lookabout ; but I am not at all clear that he *was* in the

billiard-room. Mr. Goldburg himself is not to be relied on, for don't *you* remember how he said first one thing, and then another?"

"But other people said—"

"No, I could get no one to swear that Mr. Goldburg was in the billiard-room when the alarm was given."

"They were too excited to notice, perhaps."

"That is just what they said; but I think that probably they have the same suspicion as myself, and favour him."

"I don't think that likely, Mr. Crone."

"Is there anything you think *more* likely?"

"Really, Mr. Crone, if I must think anything, I could sooner imagine Mr. Thorn did it in a fit of jealousy."

"I have thought of that, but *had* he any reason to be jealous? I should not say Miss Goldburg was a flirt."

"Oh no; far from it."

"We don't know yet who called for the pistol; perhaps Mr. Thorn may be able to clear Mr. Goldburg; but I still say he is only fit for a lunatic asylum."

"But you don't consider what a shock it would be to his niece."

"It might prevent her a greater shock. Now, you see Mr. Goldburg's unwillingness to bring Mr. Thorn

on the scene, *must* proceed from a fear of being found out; for it is not to be supposed that he would screen Mr. T. if *he* were the guilty person."

"No; certainly not," I muttered, hardly knowing what I said, for I was going over all sorts of probabilities and improbabilities in my mind. "Besides, he does not like him."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Crone, briskly rubbing his hands. "He told you so? Then that settles the matter."

"But, Mr. Crone—"

"Hush!—here is the very man I want!" he exclaimed, starting up and looking out of the window. A dogcart had driven up, but I was not in time to see the person who dismounted. However, I was not long in suspense, for presently the door opened, and Mr. Cecil Cote walked in, holding a newspaper in his hand.

"I say, Crone, what is the meaning of this?" he said, extending the paper towards him.

"The meaning is clear enough it seems to me, Cote."

"Did you put it in?"

"I did."

"Why did you?"

"For very good reasons, which will transpire in due time."

"I can't see why you should be so close with me,

Crone. What can you want with Mr. Courtney Thorn?"

" You don't perceive there is a third person present, Cote."

" Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Lookabout ; how do you do ?" He looked hard at me, as if he would like to have added, " and pray, what may your business be here ? "

It was easy for me to see that Mr. Crone did not wish to enlighten Mr. Cote about the advertisement ; because I could have been no hinderance to his doing so, as I knew all that was connected with it.

" How is your father ?" asked Mr. Crone, pushing a chair towards him, and resettling himself in his own seat, which was a remarkably comfortable one.

" Tolerably well, thanks. You are not going to revive that unfortunate business, I hope, Crone ? "

" Yes, I am ; and I want to consult you about it. Did not you say the Goldburgs were related to you ? "

" *Miss* Goldburg only : her mother would have had our estate, if she had been a boy."

" I think you said Mr. Goldburg has not a single relation ; so I'll consider you as a sort of connection, and advise you to have him examined by some first-rate medical man ; for I think, when you know all, you will agree with me, that he is not fit to be at large."

Mr. Cote looked round at me significantly.

"Oh, never mind Mr. Lookabout ; he may prove an important witness."

"Indeed ! You seem to have been making discoveries, Crone."

"I have ; and they tell against Mr. Goldburg. I think that by making out a case against him, we may make Miss Goldburg speak, if he really be innocent : it will serve her right for her obstinacy ; and if she does not speak, that will be conclusive evidence against him."

"And you propose to shut him up in an asylum ?" asked Mr. Cote, looking meditatively on the floor.

"By far the best thing for him ; don't you think so?"

"I must know *everything* before I give an opinion."

"I really must say what *I* think about it before Mr. Cote. You shall never get me as witness against Mr. Goldburg, as long as his niece is content to live with him. Is it in the nature of things that she should not show a particle of fear, if he had attempted her life ?"

"If you get so excited, Mr. Lookabout, you had better go."

"I think so, too," said Mr. Cote.

"Yes, I am going ; but again I say, I advise you to think better of it, Mr. Crone. Good morning."

As soon as I got out of the house, I gave myself no

time for reflection, but walked, I believe as rapidly as Mr. Goldburg himself, to the railway station, that I might reach London before Mr. Cecil Cote was likely to do so. I meant to advise the Goldburgs to get out of the way, and I had a wild hope that I might, perhaps, oblige Miss Goldburg to reveal who did the deed.

NINTH JOURNEY.

How to get an interview with Miss Goldburg I did not know. I arrived in London so late at night, as to make an immediate trial impossible. I could only hope I might have the good luck to see Mr. Goldburg leave the house early in the morning. I was in Rue Street before nine o'clock, but I waited in vain; though the blinds were all up at No. 13, no one was to be seen, nor did the door open once during the whole hour I waited and watched. There was nothing I regretted so much, as having lost that hour, when at last I knocked at the door.

“ Is Mr. Goldburg at home ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Miss Goldburg is, I suppose ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Show me upstairs to her.”

“ I don’t think she can see you, sir.”

“ Oh yes, she can. You need not trouble to go and ask her, for she expects me.”

“ Does she, sir ? ” said the little maid, opening her eyes.

“ Yes ; ” and I pushed past her, and ran upstairs. She followed me, but I waved her off with one hand, while knocking at the drawing-room door with the other ; I had also to be very attentive to catch the “ come in ” I expected. It was a little while before it came.

“ Mr. Lookabout ! Why were you not announced ? ”

“ You must forgive me, Miss Goldburg, but I am so anxious to speak to you. Are we likely to be interrupted by your uncle ? ”

“ At any moment,” she replied.

“ Then I must waste no time. Mr. Crone is taking measures against him.”

“ For what ? ”

“ For having in a moment of insanity shot at you.”

“ Mr. Lookabout ! ” was all she said, but in a tone that implied doubt of *my* sanity.

“ Don’t think that *I* believe it, Miss Goldburg. I have done my utmost to convince Mr. Crone that it could not be, but he will not be persuaded.”

“ How true he was,” she murmured to herself, looking absently away from me. “ And what are they going to do ? ” she asked.

“ They threaten to put him in a lunatic asylum.”

“They can’t do it,” she said, taking her spectacles from her pocket.

“I fear they can, Miss Goldburg. If a doctor examines him, as is proposed, you know better than I do the effect it will have on your uncle’s nerves.”

“Oh horrible, horrible!—don’t speak of it,” she exclaimed.

“By a word you can save all this, Miss Goldburg.”

“I?”

“Yes; you cannot say you do not know who inflicted that wound on your arm.” Her loose sleeve had fallen back and disclosed part of a conspicuous scar. She hastily drew it down, but remained silent. “What motive *can* there be for your silence, Miss Goldburg?”

“Did you not say Mr.—Mr. Thorn could clear him?”

“Yes, I did say so; but now it is doubtful. Do you know that he is advertised for?”

“No—where?”

“In the ‘Times.’”

“Then he will come.”

“You think so?”

“Oh yes, if he sees it.”

“Every moment is precious, Miss Goldburg; tell me who was the man, and I will hasten down to Mr. Crone, and—”

“Mr. Lookabout!” she exclaimed, “you are not deceiving me?”

“Deceiving you! What makes you so suspicious of me? I would do anything for you; save you any trouble.”

“What would they do to him?” she asked.

“To whom?”

“To the person you want to discover.”

“It depends. I can’t exactly say; but you will not hesitate, now your uncle’s well-being is concerned.”

“Let me think,” she said, burying her head in the cushion of the sofa.

She restrained thus some minutes, and while looking at her, I noticed a long woollen sleeve at her feet. I picked it up, and was hesitating what to do with it, when a knock at the street-door echoed up the stairs. She started from the couch—her face denoted great perplexity.

“It is my uncle; give me that sleeve.” She ran her arm into it, and at the same time exclaimed, “Oh, I forgot there was a needle in it; I was mending it.”

“Let me try to find it.”

“No, no, never mind.”

“There is a gentleman wants to see you, miss,” said Mary, putting in her head at the door.

“Who is it?”

“I don’t know, miss.”

“Ask his name.”

“Yes, miss.” An instant of suspense, and then Mary returned. “He says he has no card, miss, but he knows you.”

Miss Goldburg turned paler than she had been during our interview.

“Show him into the back room.”

Again the maid went, and in another moment I heard a door close, and a man’s step in the next room. Miss Goldburg looked at me as if about to speak, but she altered her mind, and left me without the least explanation. Now I come to an action that will raise a cry against me. I am perfectly aware of it. If any one, by chance, has sometimes had a fellow-feeling for me, of course in another moment they will at once and for ever cast me off. But it must be told. There was a door between the two rooms, which I had only noticed this very morning, while Miss Goldburg was speaking to Mary: it was quite inconspicuous, being covered with the same paper as the walls of the room. I think it could never have had the key in it before, as that seemed to me to have arrested my eye; but of this I cannot be sure. Miss Goldburg had no sooner departed, than I attacked this key very gently, but it would neither go, one way or the other. This being the case, I tried a pull, and, behold! the door came towards me without noise. The smallest crack was

enough, though they spoke very low ; I had lost the commencement of the interview—these were the first words I heard.

“ You must save my uncle—you *must*, at all risks.”

“ I thought there was something wrong, and that is why I came here. But I don’t see how I can be of any use to your uncle.”

“ They say you can.”

“ If I can, you may depend upon me ; but you have been very hard upon me, Alice.”

She made no reply to this.

“ You see, Alice, it has not been only me.”

“ No, but I could not have thought it possible.”

There was a pause.

“ Do you forgive me now ?”

“ Yes, if you save my uncle.”

“ Make no condition. How can I do so without—”

“ Hush ! say no more ; see what you can do first ; it may not be necessary to criminate—”

Another knock at that abominable street-door ; I was obliged to leave my post, expecting Mr. Goldburg to walk into the room ; but no, it was Mr. Cecil Cote.

“ Ah ! Mr. Lookabout again. I was told Miss Goldburg had a gentleman with her. Where is she ?”

“ I don’t know.”

He had left the door open, and I took advantage of it by advancing a few steps ; Miss Goldburg appeared on the landing ; she saw us both, but did not, as I expected, retire, and the next instant Mr. Thorn stood beside her.

“ How do you do, Miss Alice ? I called to see your uncle ; will he soon be home ? ”

“ Yes, I believe so. Go now, Courtney,” she added, in a lower tone.

They shook hands, and he descended the stairs ; Miss Goldburg would have gone up above the drawing-room, had not Mr. Cote prevented her.

“ You are aware that Mr. Thorn is wanted ; so is your uncle.”

“ *You* are not going to annoy my uncle ? ”

“ On the contrary, I have no doubt I shall extricate him.”

She looked fixedly in his face.

“ How ? ”

“ You will see. Here he is.”

Mr. Goldburg came dashing upstairs.

“ How is this, Alice ? I met Mr. Thorn coming out of the house.”

“ Yes, uncle ; he came a few minutes ago.”

“ What did he want ? ”

“ To see us.”

“ You seem to have been receiving company this

morning, Alice," he said, shaking hands with Mr. Cote. " You are an early visitor, Mr. Lookabout. Alice, how come you to have departed from your usual rule?"

" I really don't know, uncle."

" You will not see one gentleman when I am not at home ; and this morning I find you holding a perfect levee."

Mr. Goldburg stalked into the drawing-room, evidently much put out ; his niece went upstairs. Mr. Cote watched her out of sight, looked at me, smiled, and followed Mr. Goldburg. I thought the safest measure for myself, was to depart from the house, and accordingly I did so ; though loath to leave Mr. Cecil Cote master of the field, I was still more unwilling to encounter Mr. Goldburg's questions. Besides, had she not placed the matter in the hands of her lover ? Why should I embroil myself, and meet only scorn in return As I shut the outer door after me, a gentleman at the end of the street turned his head ; it was Mr. Thorn.

" I suppose you will return home at once, Mr. Thorn," I said, as I reached him.

" I cannot leave town to-day. Do you know who wants me ?"

" Yes ; Mr. Crone."

He walked away. Anxious to be the first to prepare Mr. Crone for his appearance, I rattled down into the country again by the very next train.

TENTH JOURNEY.

I SAW Mr. Crone that same night, and the next morning I had a visit from him.

“Cecil Cote sent me a line this morning, to ask if I could meet him at Mr. Forrester’s. It is nearly eleven now; I shall hardly have time to get back by noon; but mind you are punctual at my house with the gunsmith.”

“Mr. Cote has soon followed me down. Do let me go with you, Mr. Crone.”

“Where? to Mr. Forrester’s?”

“Yes.”

“Impossible! Cecil would be quite angry.”

“Never mind him, Mr. Crone. You can do anything, you know.”

“Well, you may come. He says he has something important to tell me; but it may be as well a third person should be present.”

So we went to Mr. Forrester’s house together, and were ushered into a good-sized, barely-furnished, and

stiffly-arranged apartment, where Mr. Cote sat awaiting his brother-magistrate."

"Mr. Lookabout *again*! This is too bad, Crone. Why couldn't you come alone?"

"You did not specify a *private* interview, Cote; but of course Mr. Lookabout shall go, if you wish it."

"Oh! I don't mind; it is a very painful business—very, for me; but I suppose it must be known by more than one by-and-by; so it does not signify."

Mr. Cote rested his arm on the table, and leant his capacious forehead on his hand. After a short pause, during which Mr. Crone had seated himself on the least uncomfortable chair in the room, he said,—
"Well, Cote, what is it?"

"Are you still of the same opinion regarding my friend Goldburg?"

"Yes; I can't see any reason for altering it yet."

"Well, then, I *must*. Mrs. Ursula has made a sad discovery, Crone."

"Really!"

"I told her to say nothing about it, never thinking that I should be obliged to speak of it myself."

"Then it is not a discovery made just at this moment?"

"No; oh, no!"

"And what is it?"

"First, I must tell you that when Miss Goldburg

left our house, she did not take away *all* her luggage : a box remained which she has been very anxious to have ; but she had also left the key behind her, and would not tell where it was."

"Well, you could have sent the box without the key."

"Certainly ; and I was on the point of doing so, when Mrs. Ursula, unfortunately, discovered the key."

"Where was it ?"

"In the crevice between the back and seat of a horsehair sofa in Miss Goldburg's bed-room."

"But how could Mrs. Ursula see it there ? She must have a keen sight."

"It attracted her eye from having a bit of red ribbon attached to it."

"Ah ! and so Mrs. Ursula had a look into the box."

"She had, I am sorry to say."

"And what did she find ?"

"This," answered Mr. Cecil Cote, drawing his hand out of the breast of his coat.

"You don't mean it !" exclaimed Mr. Crone, jumping up. "Did she really find that pistol ? Give it to me."

"Yes, indeed, she did."

"Well, it's an uncouth-looking thing enough," remarked Mr. Crone, casting an eye on me ; "the last

article one would have expected to find in a young lady's box."

"Poor Alice!" ejaculated Mr. Cote.

"C. G.," exclaimed Mr. Crone; "did you notice those initials, Cote?"

"Yes."

"What is Mr. Goldburg's Christian name?"

"Cæsar."

"I think the sooner we secure him, Cote, the better."

"I am sorry to say there is insanity in the family."

"Of course there is, but how cleverly the girl managed to secure this thing, when there was such a search after it."

"I can't see how it is possible she could have done so, if any one had discharged it at her."

"Well; but, then, here it is, and so she *must* have done so."

"Impossible, Crone."

"Then how the deuce did it get in her box?"

"She must have secreted it somewhere about her, when she fell. She has wonderful presence of mind for a woman; has she not, Mr. Lookabout?"

"Yes, I should say so, certainly; but still I doubt how she could do that; it is a very large pistol."

"Oh, she could do that well enough; I haven't a doubt of it," said Mr. Crone, impatiently.

“ Yes, I quite agree with you there, Crone ; but how could she get it from the person who fired it ?”

“ He dropped it, I dare say.”

“ What, close to her ? If he had taken aim so near, would she have escaped with only a wound on her arm ?”

Mr. Crone looked slightly posed.

“ Will you oblige me by stating what your opinion is, Cote ?”

“ It seems to me so obvious,” replied Mr. Cote, in a scarce audible voice.

“ How stupid I must be not to see it,” said Mr. Crone ; “ do you read the riddle, Mr. Lookabout ?”

Both his eyes, and Mr. Cote’s, were upon me as I answered.

“ No, I can’t say I do,” Mr. Crone.

“ Well, then, you must explain yourself, Cote.”

“ I can’t do it, Crone ; I really can’t,” exclaimed Mr. Cote, starting up, and pacing up and down the room.

“ Having proceeded so far, you *cannot* draw back.”

“ Can’t I—can’t I ; oh that I had never said anything about it ! It would have been less harrowing, if you could have seen it—if you would have spared me.”

Mr. Crone frowned, as if an unfathomable enigma had been proposed to him.

“ Goldburg did it, that’s certain,” he muttered, looking up at Mr. Cote, who had stopped just in front of him.

“ It is *not* certain, Crone. If any one did it, it was herself.” He resumed his walk immediately.

I can’t say how I felt; nor if Mr. Crone was surprised; he *looked* only infinitely disgusted.

“ I feel inclined to wash my hands of it, Mr. Lookabout,” he said.

“ Oh no, Mr. Crone, pray don’t.”

“ Let it drop altogether, Crone; but don’t imprison the uncle, when the evidence is equal, if not stronger, against the niece.”

“ I’ll tell you what, Cote, I could as soon think that I shot her, as that she attempted suicide. What should she do it for?”

“ Have I not said there is insanity in the family?”

“ Mr. Lookabout, have you perceived anything odd about Miss Goldburg?”

“ No, indeed; she is remarkably calm and rational.”

“ Yes, Mr. Lookabout, she is,” said Mr. Cote.

“ I say, Mr. Lookabout, will you go to the station; and if you are in time to catch Mr. Thorn, bring him here at once? There is no time to lose, it is after eleven—look,” said Mr. Crone, extending his watch.

"Do you expect Mr. Thorn?" I heard Mr. Cote inquiring, as I left the room.

On my way to the station I met Mr. Thorn, and telling him where to go, I repaired to the gunsmith, and took him with me to Mr. Forrester's house. Leaving him in the hall, I entered the room, and walking up to Mr. Crone, whispered,—“He's outside.”

“Ah, indeed,” replied he; “just show him in, Mr. Lookabout, will you?”

“Show him in?”

“Yes; you won't mind my speaking to a man a minute about this machine, will you, gentlemen? It will save me trouble.”

Neither Mr. Cote nor Mr. Thorn replied, but the latter looked with evident surprise at the pistol in Mr. Crone's hand. I went to the door and beckoned the gunsmith, who came as far as the threshold, and there remained.

“Come in, my good man—come in,” said Mr. Crone.

“Look here; did you ever see this before?”

“That's the very pistol I had in my hands, sir.”

“Really; how came you not to mention the initials?—see.”

“I quite forgot there were any, sir; and couldn't have told you what they were, if I had remembered.”

“Why, can't you read?”

“ Of course ; but if I could remember such little things as those, I *should* have a head.”

The gunsmith stooped over the pistol as he spoke, and I heard him whisper, “ That’s him, sir.”

“ Mr. Thorn, you know something about this pistol, as you fetched it away from this man’s shop, didn’t you ?”

“ Yes ; I did.”

“ And Mr. Goldburg took it there.”

“ I believe so,” answered Mr. Thorn.

“ You may go,” said Mr. Crone to the gunsmith.

As soon as he had left the room, Mr. Thorn asked, “ How came you by that pistol, Mr. Crone ?”

“ How came you to go for it, Mr. Thorn ?”

“ By Miss Goldburg’s desire, Mr. Crone.”

“ *Miss* Goldburg ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Then, does it belong to her ?”

“ Yes ; she values it very much : it was her father’s.”

“ What was his Christian name ?”

“ Charles.”

“ And her uncle’s, Cæsar ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Between Charles and Cæsar, what is one to do ?” muttered Mr. Crone.

“ Her uncle took it to be repaired by her request,

and afterwards she asked me to go and fetch it; as he had forgotten to do so."

"A very plausible story, indeed!" remarked Mr. Crone.

"What do you mean, Mr. Crone?" exclaimed Mr. Thorn, his eyes flashing with anger.

"I mean, that though you are trying to exculpate Mr. Goldburg, it won't do."

Mr. Thorn remained silent, and the flash faded from his eyes.

"Why have you never told me of this pistol having been at that gunsmith's, Crone?" asked Mr. Cote.

"Because I thought it best to keep my own counsel."

"That is an odd answer to make to a fellow-magistrate."

"I don't see how you could have assisted me. You know it now, and that's enough."

"It seems you preferred trusting Mr. Lookabout."

"Why, no, I did not; but you see he happened to know about it, having seen Mr. Goldburg come out of the shop. Now, we really must have those Goldburgs down here. I think I shall go up to town myself."

"No, Mr. Crone, I'll go, and bring them down," said Mr. Thorn.

"Give me your word of honour that you will."

"I will, I assure you, Mr. Crone, upon my honour."

“Very well, then, go.”

“You only wanted me to explain about that, I suppose,” said Mr. Thorn, pointing to the pistol.

“That’s all, for the present,” replied Mr. Crone ; and with a general bow for all, Mr. Thorn departed.

“You have been rather rash in this instance, Crone,” said Mr. Cote.

“How so ?”

“Why, to trust Mr. Thorn so far. I wonder you don’t suspect *him*.”

“No, no. It was not like a guilty man to answer the advertisement in person, and so soon ; mind, I don’t quite understand that engagement being broken so suddenly.”

“They have made it up, now, Mr. Crone,” I put in.

“Indeed ! that’s well for him. Did she ever give him cause for jealousy, do you know, Cote ?”

“I can’t say. Her mother was a great flirt,” answered Mr. Cote, bitterly.

“Do you think that is hereditary, like insanity ?”

“Perhaps not ; but an asylum for flirts is wanted, I think.”

“I hope you are not a sufferer, Cote,” said Mr. Crone, laughing.

“No, I am not ; but—well, now I think it is time Forrester gave us some luncheon.”

"None for me, thank you, I must be gone," said Mr. Crone, starting up. "Come, Mr. Lookabout, we'll go together."

Mr. Cote did not press us to stay.

"Now, walk on to my house, Mr. Lookabout, and wait for me; I shan't be very long." Saying this as we reached the street, Mr. Crone nodded, and walked rapidly away.

I had plenty to think about during my walk, but was not sorry when it came to an end, as it brought me to a very good luncheon spread for three, on Mr. Crone's table. I guessed the third plate had been meant for Mr. Thorn, and if he had not been my rival, I might have pitied him for his loss. I had made a very good meal, and almost digested it, before I caught the sound of wheels in the distance. Opening the window, I looked out and saw Mr. Crone's dog-cart, with himself and a female seated in it. As he drew up, he caught sight of me and laughed. Very politely did he assist the lady to descend, throwing the reins to the groom, who had jumped off from behind. I guessed, more than saw, whom he had got—for she had a thick brown veil on; it was Mrs. Ursula. Mr. Crone ushered her into the dining-room, where I still stood by the open window.

"Shut that window, Mr. Lookabout," he said, placing a chair for Mrs. Ursula near the fire.

“I don’t mind it,” said she, looking rather scowlingly at me.

“It might give you cold. What shall I offer you? A glass of wine?”

“Thank you, Mr. Crone.”

“And a biscuit?”

“If you please.”

She partly loosened her shawl, and set about refreshing herself.

“Here, bring it here,” called out Mr. Crone, to some one outside the half-open door.

A footman entered, carrying a massive box.

“Put it down there.”

“Now, Mr. Lookabout, that is Miss Goldburg’s box, and this is the key.”

He extracted a good-sized key from his waistcoat pocket and gave it to me.

“What am I to do with it?”

“You are not to apply it to that lock, most certainly. Give it to Miss Goldburg, and tell her the box has been untouched by me, though I thought it desirable to remove it from Cote Hall.”

I ran my watch-chain through the red ribbon attached to the key, before letting it drop into my waistcoat pocket.

“What do you do that for?” asked Mr. Crone.

“To make assurance doubly sure.”

“ How long that woman is over her wine,” he whispered.

“ Can’t you quicken her motions a little ? ”

“ It won’t do to offend her. But I’ll not wait till she has done.”

“ No, I should hope not,” I said, seeing how tediously she nibbled at her biscuits.

“ We can talk comfortably now, Mrs. Ursula,” said Mr. Crone, seating himself so as to face her.

Mrs. Ursula made no remark, so Mr. Crone continued.

“ Your master referred me to you about that box.”

“ What a fib to begin with, Mr. Crone,” I said to myself.

“ You found a pistol in it. Mr. Lookabout, it is in my greatcoat there ; get it out.”

The greatcoat in question lay on a chair.

“ This is it, isn’t it, Mrs. Ursula ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I wonder what made you open Miss Goldburg’s box. Had you any suspicion of what you should find ? ”

“ I did not open it ; that is, I only put the key in the lock to make quite sure that it was the right one. I hardly lifted the lid, but that pistol caught my eye directly.”

“Of course it would. It lay quite on the top of her clothes, I suppose ?”

“Yes, sir, it did.”

“And you showed it to your master ?”

“I thought it best to do so.”

“To be sure ; and he has kept it ever since ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“He didn’t think it necessary to look over the box did he ?”

“Oh, dear, no, sir ; he never even asked me for the key.”

“Indeed ! He said no more about forwarding the box to Miss Goldburg, though, I suppose ?”

“He said he would take it himself, next time he went to London.”

“Ah ! What are your ideas about that pistol, Mrs. Ursula ? I should like to know.”

Mrs. Ursula’s protruding eyes avoided Mr. Crone’s face.

“Do you think Miss Goldburg attempted to destroy herself with it ?”

“Destroy *herself* ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Ursula, dropping the bit of biscuit in her hand ; fortunately for her garments there was but little wine in her glass.

“You don’t think that likely, I see.”

“How came such a thing to come into your head, sir ?”

"I am glad you are startled at me, Mrs. Ursula ; you would be sorry, I suppose, if it entered other people's heads ?"

"Surely, sir, it won't ?"

"I can't say ; there is no clue—I mean—"

"I know what you mean, sir," interrupted she, "and I think there is a very great clue."

"Do you, really ?" exclaimed Mr. Crone, bending forward. "What a very clever woman you must be. Why she beats me, Mr. Lookabout."

"I ought to have spoken before, and then Miss Goldburg would never have been suspected of such a horrible thing ; but who was to think it ?"

"Things turn out differently to what one suspects, sometimes ; don't they, Mrs. Ursula ?"

"They do indeed, sir."

"It is always better to speak, when you have anything to say."

"I do believe it is, sir."

"Any more wine, Mrs. Ursula ?"

"No, thank you, sir," replied she, brushing a crumb from her dress ; her lips moved ; evidently she was making up her mind, to say something she thought important. Mr. Crone did not hurry her in the least : he leant back quite easily in his chair, as though what might be said by Mrs. Ursula, would require no very

great attention. I must say I expected great things from her.

“ You see, sir.”

“ Yes.”

“ You questioned me very much on two occasions, as to whether I heard anything of what passed between Miss Goldburg and Mr. Thorn, before she fainted that day.”

“ And you *did* hear what passed. I always thought as much, though you were so, ob—firm in your denial.”

“ I did not deny, sir.”

“ Oh no, very true ; trust a woman to do anything so decisive as that, when she is gifted with such powers of evasion.”

Mrs. Ursula stretched her lips, seeming to take this compliment to her sex, all to herself. I was rather relieved by that smile, as I had been fearing Mr. Crone would offend her.

“ Well, sir, I only heard one thing. I think, perhaps, I might have heard more, for my ears are very quick.”

“ Certainly, they are.”

“ But I was so taken aback that I did *not* catch what Mr. Thorn whispered in her ear.”

“ Then what you heard was spoken by Miss Goldburg ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What was it, Mrs. Ursula?” I asked, provoked at Mr. Crone’s silence.

“Be quiet, Mr. Lookabout; let Mrs. Ursula proceed as she pleases.”

“Thank you, sir. You remember how Mr. Thorn pressed her to say who the villain was.”

“Certainly, I do.”

“Sir, this is what she whispered,—‘Courtney, he is in the room.’”

“Ah!” exclaimed Mr. Crone, with a glance at me: “you are astonished, Mr. Lookabout, but how well it tallies.”

“With what, sir?”

“Never mind, at present, Mrs. Ursula; please to tell me which of the persons present *you* fixed upon?”

“Why, sir, there could be but *one* meant.”

“Of course, that is obvious; but which was *the* one in your mind?”

“The same as in your mind; as *must* be in your mind, and in that gentleman’s mind,” pointing to me.

“Indeed, Mrs. Ursula, I can’t be said to have anything in my mind just at present.”

“Well, Mrs. Ursula, it is not unnatural you should dislike to answer my question. Let us sum up, and, perhaps, we may have one to carry and store up in our minds. Reversing the order of things, we will

begin with myself, and I am easily disposed of as being, I hope, beyond suspicion, Mrs. Ursula."

"I should think so, sir."

"Well then, Mr. Lookabout here was cleared by Miss Goldburg; fortunately for him *now*. Your two masters do not come under your suspicion, I suppose?"

"La! sir, the idea!"

"Mr. Thorn it could not well be, as he was the recipient of the information. Was there any one else in the room but Mr. Goldburg?"

"You know there was not, Mr. Crone."

"Then you think *he* was the one."

"Who else could it be?"

"I can't say."

"There is not a doubt of it in my mind, and that's why she would never tell."

"But why did she tell her lover, then?" I asked.

"She did not tell her lover."

"Well, it was as good as telling him."

"I don't think so, Mr. Lookatyou," said Mrs. Ursula, making a mess of my name, and looking at me severely. "She seemed to me to say it, as though she expected it would put an end to his questions. If she did not say it for that purpose, what should have prevented her speaking out loud?"

"Excellently well spoken, Mrs. Ursula," exclaimed Mr. Crone, clapping his hands.

"Miss Goldburg never speaks loud," I said; "and, besides, she was faint."

"Well, but you all heard what he said just as she fainted, I suppose?"

"I can't say *I* did," replied Mr. Crone.

"But I did; let me think what was it; wait a minute."

"Twenty, Mr. Lookabout; don't be in a hurry: but, perhaps, Mrs. Ursula had better assist your memory."

"No; no, I have it; I remember it quite well. He said, 'Alice, you know he was—' and then the doctor came in, and I lost the rest."

"The rest was only one word, sir, 'mad.' Who could that apply to but Mr. Goldburg?"

Again Mr. Crone rubbed his hands. I could find nothing to plead in Mr. Goldburg's favour after this: my confidence in his innocence had received several shocks, and now it was giving way. I mentally reviewed my intercourse with him, and the result must have produced some outward demonstration, for Mr. Crone remarked, "You may well shake your head, Mr. Lookabout. It's a bad case, very."

"Mr. Goldburg is so odd in his ways, sir; so irritable; the least thing seems to upset him."

I could not but agree with Mrs. Ursula in my mind, but for the sake of contradicting her, I said, "Many

people are easily upset, Mrs. Ursula ; but it does not follow they would murder their nieces.”

She vouchsafed no verbal notice of my remark, but drew her shawl tight round her, as if preparing to depart.

“ You wish to get home before dark, I suppose, Mrs. Ursula ?” said Mr. Crone.

“ Yes, sir, if you please.”

“ Well, then, Mr. Lookabout shall drive you, as I have an engagement.”

Mrs. Ursula did not look overwell pleased at her proposed charioteer ; and I should have demurred at this summary disposal of my person, had not a sudden idea come into my head, which the drive would enable me to carry out. Mr. Crone rang the bell, and ordered the dogcart to be brought round.

“ Good-by, Mrs. Ursula,” he said, shaking hands heartily with that unprepossessing dame, as he helped her to the seat beside me.

“ Will you have the groom, Mr. Lookabout ?”

“ Of course, Mr. Crone, if you wish to get your dogcart back.”

“ Why, don’t you mean to return ?”

“ No, Mr. Crone,” I replied, as the groom took his seat ; and, brandishing the whip, I left him to digest my answer.

Mrs. Ursula screwed herself up in her corner to place

as much space between us as was possible under the circumstances. After driving about a quarter of a mile, I slackened my speed, and asked her if she thought her master would see me.

“ See *you*? No, indeed, that he won’t.”

“ Why not, pray?”

“ Because he does not even see people he knows.”

“ But if you told him I have a message from his friend Mr. Goldburg, he would make an exception in my favour.”

“ I don’t think he would ; indeed, I am sure not.”

“ You must be so obliging as to ask him, Mrs. Ursula ; if you don’t, he may be very angry with you some time or other.”

“ There’s no fear of that, sir ; for master is never angry.”

“ Indeed ! I am glad to hear it ; there is less chance of offending.”

“ You needn’t think that, sir ; he may be offended, though he don’t show it, and you are the very one to provoke him.”

“ Much obliged, Mrs. Ursula ; but I don’t quite agree with you, there. I *must* see him, and that’s the truth.”

“ What a stranger like you can want with my master, I don’t know.”

“ Very likely not, Mrs. Ursula ; but you must

consider that I am a great friend of your master's friend."

"It isn't likely Mr. Goldburg would make a great friend of you."

"Mrs. Ursula," I said, trying the high and mighty style on her, "do you mean to doubt a gentleman's word?"

Mrs. Ursula only grunted at this.

"I think it is time your master knew what is going on. Do you want to keep him in the dark about all this, that is brought against the Goldburgs?"

"Mr. Goldburg, say."

"Well, I'll tell you what, Mrs. Ursula, to be confidential, I think it is just possible that Miss Goldburg will allow herself to be accused, if she thinks it is the only way of escape for her uncle."

"La! sir, she wouldn't be such a ninny."

"I don't know that; Miss Goldburg is rather a peculiar character."

"I didn't know it was peculiar to be a ninny, Mr. Lookabout."

"It requires a peculiarly good temper to deal with you, Mrs. Ursula."

"And that you haven't got, sir."

"I think I have, or I should pitch you out of the gig."

We had carried on our conversation up to this point

in a low tone on account of the groom; but having raised my voice at this juncture, he burst out laughing. I increased our speed, to prevent myself from further outraging my incensed companion, who, having muttered that I was extremely "offensive" and "ungentlemanly," turned the back of her head to me, and maintained a dead silence for the rest of the way. When I had driven half up the long avenue leading to Cote Hall, Mrs. Ursula issued her commands thus,— "Drive to the servants' entrance."

"Where is it?" I asked.

"Behind there," replied she, pointing to the large new house between us and Cote Hall.

I wanted very much to ask about that house, and cast about for the most likely question to provoke an answer; but in the end I decided this remark would be better than any query,—"I wonder your master likes to have a house that does not belong to him so near. It quite spoils his park."

"Who told you it didn't belong to him?" cried Mrs. Ursula, fiercely.

"It does not matter who told me, but you can't deny it."

"But I can, and I do."

"Oh, well; then he lets it—almost as bad."

"He does no such thing. Does it look like an inhabited house, with the shutters all shut?"

“It is growing quite dusk, Mrs. Ursula, and people like to shut out these damp autumnal evenings.”

“Don’t you go setting about my master lets houses in his park. It was built for Mr. Cecil; and he’ll live there some day, when he gets a wife.”

How I chuckled to myself at having taken in the old dame so completely! In her indignation, she had not perceived that I had passed the turn to the servants’ entrance, but now she assailed me.

“You’ve passed the turn; drive back.”

“No, indeed, madam; you shall enter in style by the front door, for once in your life;” and so saying, I drew up in front of the mansion.

At a sign from me the groom jumped down, and knocked.

“I wish Mr. Cecil was at home to hear you make all that noise,” remarked Mrs. Ursula, as if *I* had thundered at the door.

I was down before her, not to help her, but to get the ear of the footman who answered the summons. Before she reached us, I had slipped a sovereign into his hand, and expressed a desire to see Mr. Cote on urgent business.

“Not Mr. Cecil Cote, *mind*,” I added.

“No, sir, of course not; he does not dine at home to-day.”

I was extremely happy to hear that. The groom went off with the dogcart, and I stood aside to let Mrs. Ursula enter.

“Walk this way, sir,” said the footman.

“Joseph, what *are* you doing?” exclaimed Mrs. Ursula, staring with astonishment.

“I’ll wait here in the hall, if you please,” I said.

“Would you rather, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Joseph, this person only wants to worry master; take care what you do.”

“Yes, yes, Mrs. Ursula; never you fear, I’ll be very careful,” and so saying, Joseph disappeared.

Mrs. Ursula, in speechless wrath, marched to the further end of the spacious hall, and from thence kept her eye on me. The footman soon returned.

“Master desires you will write your business, sir.”

Was it for this I had given my sovereign?

“No; go to him again, and say I cannot possibly write what I have to say—and stop, mention it concerns Mr. Goldburg.”

“Yes, sir.”

Away he went again, and Mrs. Ursula moved a few steps from the large window, close to which she had been standing. The twilight increased fast, and the footman did not return. I felt very much inclined to perambulate the hall, in search of some door that might

lead me into the inaccessible man's presence ; but a certain dread of stumbling on Mrs. Ursula, whom I could no longer see, withheld me from doing so. I contented myself with pacing backwards and forwards at my end of the hall. I heard a distant clock strike, and tried to count the hour ; but my ears being on the stretch for Joseph's footsteps at the same time, I must have missed many intermediate strokes, for I had but counted three, when they ceased altogether. Still Joseph did not return. In utter despair, I made a dash to my left, determined to find my way somewhere.

“ What are you doing, Mr. Lookabout ? ”

The voice made me start, although I knew it to be only Mrs. Ursula's ; but I fancied she must have taken herself off. I made no reply, but groped along the wall in search of the door through which I had seen the footman pass. I discovered the handle at last, turned it, and found myself at the foot of a dimly-lighted staircase, down which Joseph was leisurely coming. He looked surprised to see me, and then had the impudence to say,—“ I really thought you would be tired of waiting, sir, and would be gone by this time.”

Before I could make any observation, a voice behind me said,—“ He won't see him, of course, Joseph.”

“ Yes, he will, Mrs. Ursula.”

I looked round to see how she took this. She stood in the darkness of the hall, but the light from the staircase just touched her prominent face, and it looked as savage as I could possibly have desired.

“ Well, take me to your master, then.”

“ Not yet, sir; not yet,” replied Joseph, extending his arm to prevent my mounting the stairs.

“ Why not? You said he would see me.”

“ Yes, sir, but not till he rings.”

He lent against the banister halfway up the first flight, in an attitude of calm expectation, intended, I suppose, as a lesson to me. I went to the door, intending to shut Mrs. Ursula out, but she was gone.

“ Why can’t I see him at once?”

“ That I don’t know, sir; but I ought to have told you that you would most likely have to wait a long time. I had only just got master’s answer that he would see you, when I was coming down stairs.”

Now that I knew my seeing Mr. Cote only depended on time, I caught myself hoping that the bell might not ring *very* soon. The unconcern of the footman certainly tended to inspire confidence; why did not I feel it? As I stood looking at those broad oaken steps, partly covered by a rich crimson carpet (the very sight of which ought to have made me feel comfortable), what should come into my head, but my interview in

dream land, with the man I was now about to see. I think for once in my life I must have been nervous—the sensation I had, at any rate, was new.

“There it is, sir,” exclaimed the footman. “Why, it’s but a little bell to make you start so ; but perhaps you are cold, sir ; this way,” and up he went.

Two flights I ascended after him, and he opened a door on the gallery, which gave entrance to a long corridor ; either way it extended, on our right hand and on our left ; three steps took me across it in the footman’s rear : he opened another door, stood back for me to pass, and closed it after me, saying, “You must announce yourself, sir.”

I stood alone, in a short wide passage, covered all over with red baize. I do not mean the floor only, but the ceiling, walls, and door by which I had entered ; curtains of softly falling light green silk at the end excepted, all was lined with this red baize. From the centre of the ceiling hung a pair of stag’s antlers, a fox’s brush, and the skull of the same animal, from the teeth of which appeared to depend a silver lamp, shaped like a yacht, and by the light it cast, I saw all I am trying to describe. The walls on either side of me had a very open network of leather, fastened over part of their surface, and behind it were arrayed guns, whips, pistols, and all other articles necessary to a sporting gentleman. I made a step in advance, and

my foot sank in the soft carpeting without making the slightest sound. I felt very much more dreamy than at the time I *really* dreamt of Mr. Cote. I could not think where I was to go, or what I was to do. Having been told to announce myself, I determined to follow the direction implicitly, and see what it would bring forth.

“Mr. Lookabout,” I said, but my voice had so muffled a sound, that I felt sure it could reach no one but myself. I went on a little further, fancying that my feet sank deeper and deeper, and that my breath became oppressed. When I had nearly reached the end of the passage, I perceived, on my left, a small door partly open. I knocked at it, but my knuckles lost themselves in the baize, without making the smallest noise. This being the case, I pushed it gently back, and saw a tolerably good fire burning on a hearth just opposite to me. I kept the door between myself, and whatever might be in that part of the room which it screened from my view, that I might have a look at the top of the room on my left. The wainscoting, of nearly black oak, ceased about a yard from the lofty ceiling, and this space was filled by glass, coloured almost yellow by the brilliant light on the other side of it. But vivid as it was, it left the lower part of the room, on the threshold of which I stood, but very partially lit. By a desperate effort, I cleared my

throat, and also cleared the door. There sat Mr. Cote, sideways to me, and wrapped in an ample cloak. His head was turned away from me, and he did not notice my presence, either by word or motion. What an extraordinary chair he sat in! I saw it but imperfectly, and how to describe it, I know not. It was of perfectly white wood, and very cumbrous. If I had not seen him sitting in it, I should most certainly have set it down, as the model of some recondite and impossible invention. There was a large table between me and the fire; a few low book-cases against the wall, and nothing else, not even a chair for me to sit on.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Cote,” I began; “I am afraid it is very intrusive of me, but I—I am sure you will forgive, when you hear what has induced me to—to intrude upon you.”

When I had got to the end of this commencement, Mr. Cote, remaining immovable and silent, I could scarcely refrain from beating a retreat. Casting about for some more eloquent apology, I was unexpectedly relieved by these words, uttered in a low, slow accent, that ought to have been reassuring, but was not.

“I desire to hear it.”

What did he desire to hear? Was *it* my business? Of course it must be.

“You shall, sir, and I will be as brief as possible. Mr. Goldburg is in danger of being shut up in a

lunatic asylum, and I thought, by making you aware of it, I might do him service."

"Why did you think so?"

"I can hardly tell you, sir. I acted more from feeling, than reason."

"You did."

"Still I have a strong hope that you may know something to extricate him."

"Is it desirable?"

"To save him from a madhouse? Surely, you cannot mean that?"

"He would be taken care of."

"But, sir, you do not think Mr. Goldburg mad?"

"How has he incurred the danger you spoke of?"

"He is quite unconscious of it, Mr. Cote; he is suspected of having shot his niece that day, when—when I first had the honour of entering your house."

I had been going to say, "seeing you," but it seemed to me *that* would have sounded like mockery. My hope of some incredulous expression from Mr. Cote, was disappointed. After a short pause, during which I had lost all idea what next to say, he inquired,—"Is there sufficient evidence?"

"Mr. Crone thinks so; but some differ from him—that is to say, it has been suggested that Miss Goldburg shot herself."

“That could not be.”

“No; Mr. Crone will be glad to hear you are of the same opinion as himself there.”

“It is not a matter of opinion.”

I knew it was not, after Mrs. Ursula’s revelation, but his conviction must proceed from some other reason; therefore I did not express myself certain on the subject, but awaited his further speech.

“I surmise from what you have said that Miss—the young lady, could not tell whence the shot came.”

“No, Mr. Cote, she has refused to speak on the matter. Am I wrong in supposing, that perhaps you saw what no one else did?”

“You are.”

“Indeed. Then I am glad you were not annoyed by any examination at the time.”

“Who wished to examine me?”

“Mr. Crone.”

“And why did he not do so?”

“Mr. Goldburg set his face against it: and, indeed, I promised him to do my best to prevent it.”

I plumed myself on this speech; I thought it would be a feather in Mr. Goldburg’s cap, and mine too.

“They might have taken my evidence through my son, if it had been requisite.”

“Certainly, sir; but as it happens that you saw nothing, it is as well you were not annoyed.”

“ But I heard.”

Subdued, but impressive, were those words.

“ The pistol was fired from this house.”

“ You heard it, sir?”

“ Yes.”

“ Very near you, I suppose?”

“ From that window.”

He extended one hand from the folds of his cloak towards the door where I stood, but he never turned his head. I looked about, but I could see no window in the room. His hand slowly returned to his side, and was lost once more in the shadow of his cloak.

“ Which window, sir?”

“ Without.”

I looked out of the door, and raised the green curtain at the end of the passage—*there* was the window.

“ Do you mean the window outside, sir?”

“ I do.”

“ And you were not in time to see the person.”

“ How can *I* hasten?”

I was quite abashed.

“ There can be no question raised of suicide now,” he said.

“ No, sir. Of course your evidence would be conclusive.”

“That is well ; and that is all I can do.”

I ought to have taken this as a dismissal ; but now I was as unwilling to go as I had been at first to stay.

“I should like to ask you one question, sir, before I go. Is there insanity in Mr. Goldburg’s family ?”

“I know nothing of his family. Have you heard that there is ?”

“Yes ; it was given as a reason for suspecting Miss Goldburg.”

“If there is a doubt, it can only relate to her father’s family.”

“Thank you,” I said, feeling some compunction for having touched on such delicate ground.

“Why do you thank me ?”

“For your kindness in patiently enduring my questions. But I fear I have rendered Mr. Goldburg no service.”

“You are a friend of his ?”

“I am ; and even if he is guilty, I hope, for his niece’s sake, nothing may be proved.”

“There is no witness ?”

“No ; but Miss Goldburg, it has been discovered, knows who attempted her life, though she will not say so.”

“Her life might not have been aimed at.”

“Whose, then ?”

“There are accidents in life.”

“Very true; there is comfort in that. There could be no motive, and I cannot think that Mr. Goldburg, though rather eccentric, could do so mad a deed as deliberately take aim at the niece he seems to be so fond of.”

“He *is* fond of her, then?”

“Very. Had Mr. Goldburg access to your room while staying in the house?”

“Occasionally.”

“Pardon me another question. Had any one else?”

“No.”

Some senseless exclamation escaped me. He slightly turned his head, so that I just caught his profile for an instant. The fire had sunk low, which made the room darker than when I had entered it, and that side face view, was scarcely so distinct as the shadow of it would have been on the wall, had there been a sufficient degree of light. I wondered the brilliancy above did not enlighten us more.

“It will go hard with Mr. Goldburg, I fear.”

“Is there not a harder lot than an asylum?”

“A prison, you mean.” He did not reply; so I added,—“It will be a blow to his niece.”

“She will marry; he said she would.”

“Who said so?”

“Her uncle.”

I was afraid to say any more, and the silence that ensued obliged me to take leave.

“I think of going to London to-night, sir. Have you any commands for Mr. Goldburg?”

“None.”

“I believe they are coming down.”

“Here?”

“I don’t know. I suppose not, unless they are invited.”

“I never invite, but they can come.”

“I shall be glad to have to tell them that. And now, I will wish you good evening, sir. I am afraid I have wearied you out.”

He gently bent his head, which looked more like an assent to what I said, than a return for my bow, as he could not have seen it. Again wishing him a good evening, I retreated through the passage into the corridor, which I found pitch dark, until the door leading to the staircase was opened by the footman, who, I suppose, heard me fumbling.

“You have been a long time, sir,” he said.

“And have you been waiting on the stairs all the time?”

“Yes, sir; I thought you would be out directly.”

The hall was well lighted by a chandelier in the centre, which made me think Mr. Cecil might be come home, but the footman replied in the negative, when I

inquired. It was a very cold, damp evening, and I felt the want of a greatcoat, but I did not return to my hotel for one, because I guessed Mr. Crone would be there ready to cross-question me. No, I would go and see what the Goldburgs were doing, at once.

ELEVENTH JOURNEY.

I saw immediately, by Mary's face, that something was wrong.

"Has Mr. Thorn been here?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, he is here now; but Miss Goldburg is very ill."

"What is the matter with her?"

"Oh! sir, her arm that was so badly wounded is very bad; the doctor says there's a needle in it."

"A needle in it!"

As these words passed my lips, I recollected Miss Goldburg's exclamation, before she went to see Mr. Thorn in the front drawing-room.

"Can I see Mr. Goldburg?"

"I'll tell him you are here, if you'll please to walk into the dining-room."

She ushered me in, and I found myself in company with Mr. Thorn. He bowed very haughtily, I thought; but he was a haughty looking young man at all times.

"I am sorry to hear Miss Goldburg is so ill," I began.

"I have already written to tell Mr. Crone," said he, as though that would settle my business.

"I don't come from Mr. Crone; but will he get your letter this morning?"

"I suppose so."

"Does Mr. Goldburg know what you came to London for?"

As he did not seem disposed to answer me, I said,—"It is necessary I should know, that I may guide myself accordingly. I hear him coming."

"Is it likely I would harass him at such a time?"

Mr. Goldburg dashed into the room.

"How d'you do, I am glad to see you," was the gracious greeting I received.

"Have you settled the county business?" he said to Mr. Thorn, who looked exceedingly bewildered at the question.

"Mr. Goldburg alludes to the business you were advertised for," I said, quickly.

"So that's how you have got him, is it?" exclaimed Mr. Goldburg, sharply. "Well, the things you will do to gain your end, Mr. Lookabout! but after your promise, I—"

"I assure you, Mr. Goldburg, I knew nothing of it—it is *entirely* Mr. Crone's doing."

He looked a little pacified.

“No, of course you did not; you would hardly have been so foolish as that.”

Mr. Thorn looked at us, but said nothing.

“You can’t have despatched your business yet, Mr. Thorn.”

“How can you talk of business to me, Mr. Goldburg?”

“Because you had much better be about it than here.”

“Ask Alice if she thinks so.”

“Nonsense; Alice is incapable of thinking at all now.”

“Is she so bad as that?” I said.

“Yes, just at present; but she will be all right by-and-by, of course. So seldom as she takes up a needle, that she should just go and run it in her arm!”

Mr. Goldburg made an impatient motion as he spoke—then pulled out his watch.

“I suppose you are not going to sit here all day, Mr. Thorn?”

“Yes, I am, Mr. Goldburg. I shall not be in your way. I sent a note up to Alice, and she has promised an answer, which I shall wait for.”

“I left her asleep, and I told her when the note was given to her, not to trouble herself by reading it even. Such selfishness!”

Mr. Goldburg marched from one window to the other, till he had pretty well inspected the sky from all three ; then he turned round on us with this information,—“I am going out, gentlemen ; but if you will return in the afternoon, Mr. Lookabout, I shall be at leisure to speak to you.”

“Thank you, Mr. Goldburg, but can’t you give me just five minutes now ?”

“Yes, I *can* give you five minutes, but not more. Come up into the drawing-room, and be quiet.”

Although Mr. Goldburg gave this direction to me, he by no means followed it himself, and I have no doubt his niece’s slumbers were broken by our ascent.

“Now, then, what is it ?”

“I have seen Mr. Cote.”

“Indeed, and I imagine you have a message from Cecil for me.”

“I mean *old* Mr. Cote.”

Mr. Goldburg stared at me longer than I had ever known him do before, then said decidedly,—“I don’t believe it,” and turned on his heel.

“Well, but, Mr. Goldburg, just listen ; he said you can pay him a visit.”

“Ah—ha—ha ; really, now that betrays you at once, Mr. Lookabout.”

“Why ?”

“Because you don’t happen to know that Mr. Cote never sent an invitation in his life.”

“Yes, I do happen to know it, because he told me, Mr. Goldburg; but still he said you might come.”

“Of course, I know that. Did I not take my niece there, when we arrived from India. She had a wish to see the place, and I did not wait for invitations.”

“Do you think you shall go there again?”

“I don’t know. But where and how did you see the old man? that is, if you really did see him.”

“I saw him with my own eyes, and in his own house, Mr. Goldburg.”

“On what pretext did you get admitted?”

“My friendship for you, Mr. Goldburg.”

“Pshaw! that would be no passport, even if you *were* a friend. But I can’t stop any longer now. I’ll hear more about it when next I see you.”

“Would you allow me to rest here half-an-hour, Mr. Goldburg? I have such a bad cold coming on.”

“Yes, so I hear by your voice; but what good will resting do it?”

“I was travelling nearly all last night.”

“Oh, indeed! Come up express to tell me of your interview with Mr. Cote? I should advise a cab, if you can’t walk.”

“My bones ache at the idea, Mr. Goldburg. Pray, let me stay here a little bit.”

“ Well, don’t cough ; hush, you’ll wake her : her room is right over this.”

“ I’ll not make a noise, I promise you.”

“ You had better go before you choke yourself with that pocket-handkerchief.”

“ You allow Mr. Thorn to stay—why mayn’t I ?”

“ I don’t allow him—he will ; and if she has made it up with him, I can’t thwart her, though it’s a great nuisance.”

“ It is all over with me, Mr. Goldburg.”

“ I fear—but I don’t know, either. They quarrelled without reason ; at least, she never gave *me* any reason. They have made friends without reason : why should they not fall out unreasonably again, Mr. Lookabout ?”

“ I wish they might.”

“ And so do I. Good-by. If you stay, keep an eye on Thorn.”

Saying this, Mr. Goldburg departed, leaving me to meditate on the position I occupied between Miss Goldburg overhead and my rival below. Heedless of draughts, I placed my chair opposite the open door, so as to command a view of any one passing outside. Little Mary very soon appeared, with a bit of white paper in her hand.

“ Give that to me ; I will give it to Mr. Thorn.”

“ But Miss Goldburg told me to be sure and not give it even to master.”

“ Well, but she did not tell you not to give it to me.”

“ No, sir ; but she doesn’t know you are here.”

“ And do you think she would object to my giving it instead of you ? ”

“ Master said I was never to think, sir.”

“ You are a very good girl to remember your master’s directions so well ; but don’t you know that you are thinking now ? ”

“ No, sir, I’m not.”

“ Yes, you are ; you are thinking this,—‘ Mr. Thorn won’t like to have the note from him so well as from me.’ ”

“ Indeed, sir, I wasn’t—I wasn’t, indeed. There it is, sir ; if you will please to give it him directly.”

“ Yes, yes—of course ; that’s a good girl.”

Mary went down stairs, and I retreated into the room to read the note. Yes, I am shame-proof. I fancy that by this time I am too well known, to excite surprise by what may, perhaps, be harshly termed, my “dishonourable actions.” Animadversion may be lavished on me : I am hardened. These few words were traced on the paper, in very shaky characters,—“ Say nothing to my uncle. I will come down as soon as I can, and tell you all.”

Mary came up again with a cup in her hand.

“There, you *may* take that to Mr. Thorn. Run at once.”

She put the cup on the step below the silent clock, and did as I bid her.

“Not very tender—that was some comfort.”

Mary returned.

“Are you nurse?” I asked.

“Oh no, sir. Master told the doctor to send a nurse, and she’s up with Miss Goldburg now.”

I made myself comfortable on the sofa for awhile; but I could not get rid of a headache that I had got up with. I felt hot and fidgetty, though the fire had nearly expired; so I wandered out of the room, and, by a happy chance, looked from the staircase window. Running down stairs with all speed, I was just in time to prevent Mr. Crone from startling Miss Goldburg by a knock.

“Ah!” exclaimed he, “so you *are* here. I am up to you, you see; where’s Mr. Goldburg?”

“Out; hush! she is ill.”

“Oh! I dare say.”

“Mr. Thorn has written to tell you.”

“Has he? How right I was to follow you up, then. I might have anticipated something of this; Cecil was right; I *was* rash.”

“But, really, Mr. Crone, it is a true bill;” and I told him of Miss Goldburg’s arm.

"Well! I am glad of it," was his hard-hearted reply. "It will make her more willing to tell the truth, if her arm smarts to remind her of who hurt it."

"Will you see Mr. Thorn?"

"The very man I want! Is he here?"

"Yes."

"Really! I *am* fortunate to find you all together. Mr. Goldburg will be here soon too, I dare say. It's a dingy old house."

Mr. Crone gave a sharp survey all round him as he spoke, and I opened the dining-room door.

"How d'you do, Mr. Crone. I heard your voice, so I'm not surprised to see you. But you must not speak to Mr. Goldburg about leaving London, just now."

"Why not?"

Mr. Thorn handed him the slip of paper I knew so well, as an answer to his query.

"If she really means what she says, I'll give her a little grace. I don't wish to be harsh, but Mr. Goldburg might and ought to be taken up."

Mr. Thorn gave no token of dissent, and Mr. Crone continued,—"So she never told you who the person was, Mr. Thorn?"

"Did I not tell you so at the time?"

"Ay! so you did. She only told you he was in the room."

“ What ?”

“ Ah ! You see I know all about that, so you can discuss it with me without fear of breaking your promise to Miss Goldburg.”

“ I don’t see what there is to discuss. You know as much as I do, it seems.”

“ And, perhaps a little more, Mr. Thorn. I can guess the reason of your sudden break with Miss Goldburg, now.”

“ Say of her break with me, Mr. Crone.”

“ Yes ! that is certainly more correct. Well then, she broke with you because you threatened to expose her uncle.”

“ No, Mr. Crone ; she quarrelled with me, because the moment she told me it was some one in the room, I guessed her uncle.”

“ I was pretty near the mark, Mr. Thorn. Did she say it was *not* her uncle ?”

“ She was so much offended, that she would not speak on the subject, when I went to see her, after her wound had been dressed.”

“ And she made you swear to conceal what she had said ?”

“ No ! she has an objection to swearing, and was very angry with me for taking an oath, when she only required a simple promise.”

“ Why did you ? You ought to have *made* her tell

you who it was, if she did not want her uncle to be suspected."

"I told her I should not be the only one to suspect him; but she would not believe me."

"To tell you so much, and then behave as she did! There's no sense in it."

"She said she knew I should make a fuss, and she wanted the matter to pass over. I did not wish to expose her uncle, but I could not succeed in pacifying her."

"Do you suspect him as much as ever, Mr. Thorn?"

"I try not to think of it till she tells me all, as she promises."

"A cautious answer, Mr. Thorn."

"I say, Mr. Crone, why can't we fasten the guilt on Mrs. Ursula? What a pity Miss Goldburg spoke in the masculine gender."

"Why do you want to bring that excellent woman into trouble, Mr. Lookabout?"

"Because she is a detestable creature."

"Ah, I heard how you fell out by the way. She was not sufficiently communicative to suit your taste, I fancy."

Scarcely had Mr. Crone spoken, than he started to his feet, and Mr. Thorn and I did the same. We had all three been sitting with our backs to the door, and a

voice close to our ears said, "Get me a chair, Mary, and go away."

"Miss Goldburg!" exclaimed Mr. Crone, while I forestalled both Mary and Mr. Thorn in getting the chair.

"Yes, I am come down to say a few words. I know you are come to excite my uncle—wait a moment."

She leaned back in her chair, and the soft grey shawl in which she was wrapped quivered.

"Alice, you should not have done this. You might trust me for not exciting your uncle."

"Yes; but you do not understand him, Mr. Thorn. I have been very foolish—I ought to have spoken at the time. Mr. Crone, my uncle is as innocent as you are."

She must have been in great pain; the shade under her eyes extended below the rim of her spectacles, and her lips were parched.

"Then who is it?" inquired Mr. Crone.

"Mr. Cote."

"Mr. Cote!" we all echoed.

"But it is impossible, the old man"—began Mr. Crone.

"*Not* the old man."

"Why, you can't possibly mean Cecil, Miss Goldburg?"

“Yes, I do.”

“Cecil Cote, Alice? Then why be so secret about it?”

“If you cannot perceive my motive, Mr. Thorn, it is useless to explain it.”

“But what motive could *he* have had for such a deed?” exclaimed Mr. Crone. “Are you quite sure, Miss Goldburg? Ready to swear to it?”

“If it is positively necessary, not otherwise.”

“I can understand Miss Goldburg’s unwillingness to accuse Mr. Cecil. His father is her godfather, and they are also related to her.”

“Upon my word, Mr. Lookabout, you have taken pains to inform yourself. But what caused Cecil’s animosity towards you, Miss Goldburg?”

“Can I see into his heart?”

“You must have offended him in some way, or perhaps it was merely an accident.”

“I hope so.”

“I suppose you knew him before your visit to Cote Hall?”

“Yes, he made a tour through Germany, before I went out to India with my uncle.”

“And you made his acquaintance there. How long ago?”

“About three years. Now, you will not mention the subject to my uncle—promise you won’t.”

“ No, I won’t speak to him about it, at present, you may rely on that, Miss Goldburg. Why did you not tell him ? ”

“ Because he never asked me.”

“ What made *him* so supine in the business, I wonder ? ”

“ I can go now ? ” she said, rising.

“ Let me call your maid, Alice.”

“ Yes, do ; but there’s my uncle’s knock. Don’t let her open the door till I am upstairs.”

Clinging to the bannister, she slowly ascended, while Mr. Thorn ran to stop Mary from opening the door, and Mr. Crone and I remained looking at each other. Presently the knock was repeated, in a subdued but impatient manner. Mr. Thorn came back to the room, and we gently closed the door and waited. We heard Mr. Goldburg run up two steps at a time, and almost immediately come down again. He entered the room with great impetus, but fell back a step on seeing the occupants.

“ I leave two, I find three. What is *your* business, Mr. Crone ? ”

“ I thought I should find Mr. Lookabout in your house, Mr. Goldburg. I am sorry your niece is so ill.”

“ She will soon be better, if she sleeps so well. I left her sleeping, and as the nurse would not

admit me just now, I suppose she is not awake yet."

Mr. Crone hurriedly took his leave, and Mr. Thorn did the same, saying he would call in the evening to hear the doctor's last report.

"The less that door is knocked at the better, I should say, Mr. Thorn," was Mr. Goldburg's remark.

"Come, Mr. Lookabout."

Thus summoned by Mr. Crone, I was obliged to go also; and I was surprised Mr. Goldburg should make no effort to detain me, for the sake of hearing more about my visit to Mr. Cote. Either it had passed from his mind, or he did not care about it. How differently constituted we are, to be sure!

"Where have you put up, Mr. Lookabout?" asked Mr. Crone, as we walked along the street.

I told him where.

"We may as well go there, too, Mr. Thorn."

"Are you going to stay in London, Mr. Crone?"

"Only till to-morrow. Then we'll go down and see what Cecil Cote has to say for himself, Mr. Lookabout."

"Very well, Mr. Crone, I shall be happy to accompany you."

"You need not tell me that. Shall you come with us, Mr. Thorn?"

“No; I can’t leave London while Miss Goldburg is so ill. I am going this way—good morning.”

“Won’t have our company,” said Mr. Crone, shrugging his shoulders.

“Do you know, I think he is not very well pleased with Miss Goldburg.”

“Do you, Mr. Crone?”

“Yes. Didn’t you see how he frowned when she inferred that he was dull of comprehension?”

“No; I did not notice him; I was too busy looking at her. I don’t think she cares much about him, do you, Mr. Crone?”

“Oh, don’t ask me about women’s likes and dislikes; I am quite out of my depth there. And so, after all, it seems that pistol in her box did not do the deed.”

“I might have given her the key, if I had thought of it.”

“As soon as she is better we must have her down. I should doubt her accusation very much, had not Cecil wanted to make us believe her cracky: that looks ugly.”

“Yes it does—very, Mr. Crone.”

Thus talking, we reached the hotel and dined together,—that is, mine was but a nominal dinner, for I felt feverishly ill.

“I’ll tell you what, Mr. Lookabout,” said Mr. Crone,

when he had finished his repast ; "if I was you I would go to bed, and try to nip that cold in the bud."

" Well, Mr. Crone, I think that's very good advice, and I'll take it."

Before retiring for the night, Mr. Crone looked in on me, and said Mr. Thorn had joined us at the hotel, after all.

" Yes ; and he is in a dreadful way, Mr. Lookabout. It seems the doctor found Miss Goldburg much worse : what a foolish girl she was to come down stairs."

" Why, Mr. Crone, you would hardly believe she was ill."

" No ; but there was no mistaking the fact when I saw her. The needle has not been extracted. I hope it may not be a case of amputation, Mr. Lookabout."

" What a dreadful idea to come into your head, Mr. Crone !"

" Don't throw all the clothes off your bed. You have not been losing your heart, have you, Mr. Lookabout ?"

" Do you think I should tell you if I had ?"

" I should hope not. I abhor sentimental confidences. But it's better she lost her arm, than her life."

" You give her a very poor choice, Mr. Crone."

" Do you know I let her off easy to-day ; I never asked her where Cecil was, and how she saw him. But she

came so wonderfully straight to the point, that it put everything out of my head."

"I think I can tell you where he was, Mr. Crone."

"Why, she has not told you, surely?"

"No; but Mr. Cote—the old man I mean—has told me."

Mr. Crone scrutinized my face, but I suppose discovered no symptoms of delirium, for he would not have asked,—“Do you really mean that Mrs. Ursula let you approach her master?”

“No, I don’t mean that; I have not the slightest obligation to the old creature; but I managed to see old Mr. Cote, nevertheless.”

“And what did he say to you?”

A violent fit of sneezing prevented any immediate answer on my part; but as soon as it was fairly over, I hoarsely proceeded to relate my experience of Cote Hall and its master. It will be surmised that Mr. Crone cross-questioned me in his usual fashion, but he did not: on the contrary, he only listened, nodding his head occasionally, with a “yes” and a “well.” He did interrupt me once, though.

“Now, Mr. Lookabout, all I want to know is, what Mr. Cote said to you. I don’t care a jot about his rooms, or his furniture; so don’t trouble to tell me what they were like.”

When I had quite done, he asked, "Does he really suspect Mr. Goldburg, now?"

"I don't think Mr. Cote troubles himself to suspect anybody, Mr. Crone; and, if he did, a wizard alone could penetrate his ideas."

"I'll be the wizard, Mr. Lookabout. And now, good night to you, and I hope you will wake well enough to travel in the morning."

"Oh yes. Mind you don't go without me, Mr. Crone."

He was out of the room, so perhaps did not hear me. When I emerged from my room in the morning, I saw Mr. Crone and Mr. Thorn talking together; the latter, catching sight of me, walked away,

"What's the matter, Mr. Crone? He looks rather dejected," I said, pointing to Mr. Thorn's retreating figure.

"He is just come from Rue Street, and Miss Goldburg is worse—sent for another doctor."

This was very bad news for me as well as Mr. Thorn; but *I*, making no ostentation of my feelings, did not desert the breakfast-table—not that I could eat anything, and afterwards calmly prepared to accompany Mr. Crone down to Cote Hall.

TWELFTH JOURNEY.

WE were told that Mr. Cecil Cote was on the point of going to dinner, but would see us, notwithstanding. The footman showed us into the room memorable from having contained us all, on the day of my ill-starred second journey. Mr. Cecil joined us very soon, and asked, with a courteous smile, if we would take a chop with him.

“ No, indeed, thank you,” replied Mr. Crone, rather abruptly. “ We have other business than dining here.”

“ Has that tiresome fellow been bothering about the right of road again, Crone ? ” said Mr. Cote, seating himself on the couch.

“ I am come on a much graver affair,” replied Mr. Crone.

“ What is it, then ? You are longer than usual in coming to the point.”

“ I may well be, Cecil ; a very serious charge has been brought against you.”

Mr. Crone fixed his eyes on him keenly as he spoke, and I too could feel no delicacy in doing the same.

The lingering smile on Mr. Cecil's face did not die away—nothing of the kind ; it gradually revived and beamed upon Mr. Crone, as he said,—“ Really !”

“ I am not joking, Cecil, as you may see.”

“ I am quite aware of that.”

“ I do hope you will be able to clear yourself from the charge.”

“ Who brings it ?”

“ Miss Goldburg.”

“ Yes ; and what may it be ?”

“ You were the person, she says, who fired at her.”

Mr. Cecil continued to look unwaveringly in Mr. Crone's face.

“ It must have been an accident, Cecil ?”

“ What ?”

“ Was it an accident ?”

Mr. Cecil made no reply ; the smile had passed away, but he looked pleasant ; and if he was deeply considering, his eyes were safe custodians of his thoughts.

“ Come, Cecil, what have you to say ?”

“ Let her prove it ;” as he said this, he threw himself further back on the couch.

“ So she shall, as soon as she is well enough.”

“ Is she ill ?”

“ Yes.”

“Poor thing!—and what else has she said? Any motive assigned? but that, of course!”

Now, if he had addressed me, I should have said, “No!” as a matter of course; but that cunning Mr. Crone looked full to overflowing with knowledge, and replied,—“We won’t speak of what might, or might not be a motive, just now, Cecil.”

“Oh! pray don’t save my feelings. She would not be her mother’s daughter, if she had not made sport of them for your diversion.”

The speech was bitter, the tone a little so, but the face conveyed no notice, that anger was betraying its owner into a rash admission. Mr. Crone was up to his advantage.

“Well! you see women are women, and in this case, it was not only pardonable, but necessary that—”

“Miss Goldburg should inform you of her rejections,” interrupted Mr. Cecil.

My surprise was great, and Mr. Crone’s must have been equally so, but he showed none at all.

“Jealousy does lead to rash deeds, certainly,” he said, in a meditative way.

“But it was a fearful revenge for a rub to your feelings, Cecil.”

“Who says I revenged myself? Will you take the word of a vain girl and bring it against me, as though it were the verdict of a whole jury?”

“I don’t think she is a particularly vain girl ; but if she can make good her word, and you cannot prove yourself innocent, I am sorry for your father, that’s all.”

“My father is safe from all disturbance. You had a message from Mr. Goldburg for him the other night, it seems, Mr. Lookabout.”

“Yes—that is—yes, I had.”

“It was extraordinarily good of him to see you.”

“It was,” I replied.

“I am glad you appreciate it.”

“Now, Cecil, I am unwilling this should get abroad and be talked about ; but, to keep it private, I must take a great responsibility upon myself.”

“None at all, Crone, I have a shoal of friends ; you may go round to them all, and I have no doubt their united bail will exceed your fortune and mine too.”

He said this in a smilingly sarcastic manner ; rose and walked to the window, where he stood, softly whistling, with his arms folded on his chest.

“Mr. Lookabout, will you drive into the town and bring Mr. Forrester back with you ?” said Mr. Crone.

I assented, and he added, speaking to Mr. Cecil,—“I think Forrester is one of your greatest friends, and so I’ll be content with him and yourself, for the present.”

“Just as you please ; but wait a moment, Mr. Look-about.”

He went to a side-table, took a worn quill from an inkstand thereon, tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and proceeded to write with great speed. Tossing the pen away when he had done, he opened the drawer of the inkstand, extracted an envelope for his note, stooped for the pen to direct it, and then handed the letter to me, desiring I would let it dry before placing it in my pocket.

“Or else,” he added, pointing to the address, “Mr. Forrester will be in a mess.”

I drove at a good speed, and delivered the note to Mr. Forrester’s servant. Very soon that gentleman appeared, and rigidly ascended to the seat beside me.

“Give me the reins, I’ll drive,” he said ; and I complied.

“There’s something the matter with the harness ; just look to it, if you please.”

“It’s all right, Mr. Forrester,” I said, unwilling to descend.

“I cannot go on until you inform me what it is that frets the horse’s head.”

“I assure you it’s all right, but I’ll get down to satisfy you.”

Scarcely had my feet touched the ground, when lash went the whip in Mr. Forrester’s hand, and he

was far a-head of me in no time. "I may thank Mr. Cecil's note for this" was my unspoken comment, as I started on foot for Cote Hall. But ere I had traversed half the road, I met the dogcart with Mr. Crone in it, and very glad I was of a lift.

"How come you not to return with Mr. Forrester?"

"You did not particularly specify that I was to return, Mr. Crone, did you?"

"Oh, it does not matter in the least, only I feared you must be feeling very ill, to show such unwonted indifference."

"To tell the truth, Mr. Crone, I *do* feel ill."

"Your cold seems very heavy. Where shall I drive you?"

"I saw my old lodgings vacant as I went along the street; drive me there, please."

"Very well."

"Have you settled matters to your satisfaction, Mr. Crone?"

"Yes, yes; it's all right; I hope that girl will be well soon, though."

"Do you know, Mr. Crone, it was too bad to make him think, Miss Goldburg said, what she never did say." Mr. Crone only laughed. "I hope you exonerated her after I left."

"No, no, Mr. Lookabout, that wouldn't do. He

would be on his guard for ever afterwards, besides being infuriated with me."

"But now he is infuriated with her; suppose he were to shoot her again, Mr. Crone? It would be your doing."

"That's bad logic, Mr. Lookabout; what he does is done by himself. At present he is coolly eating his dinner with old Forrester, and Miss Goldburg being miles away, he has leisure to cool down."

My old maid landlady expressed herself quite ready to receive me, and in her house I was completely laid up for a week. Mr. Crone occasionally relieved my solitude for a few minutes at a time, and from him I heard fluctuating accounts of Miss Goldburg's health. Another week passed away; and as I had not seen Mr. Crone for two days, I walked over to his house, and by good luck found him at home.

"Ah!" said he, "I was just coming to you. I have had a note from Mr. Thorn, requesting me to secure an apartment for the Goldburgs, as they mean to come down in a day or two."

"Then she is convalescent?"

"I suppose so."

"I hope you have not agreed about a lodgings yet."

"Why?"

“ Because the drawing-rooms over my head will be vacant to-morrow. Do take those.”

“ Very well, I have no objection ; but will they be ready in time ?”

“ Oh dear, yes, I’ll answer for that.”

I posted back to my landlady, and flurried her almost out of her wits, with the news of fresh lodgers, expected to come down upon her at any moment of the day or night. From the time she heard it, the house was made so thoroughly uncomfortable, that I found the streets infinitely preferable. The day after the rooms were vacated, Mr. Crone paid me a flying visit.

“ I say, Mr. Thorn might have told me *when* they were coming,” he observed.

“ Yes, I think so ; but perhaps they hardly can tell, as it depends on Miss Goldburg’s ability to travel.”

“ I hope they are not going to play us false. I have a great mind to run up, but I’m so busy just now. There’s rather an amusing discussion going on at the town hall : will you come with me ?”

Hang the discussion and the town-hall ! I went, and when I returned, my landlady told me they were come.

“ How many ?” I asked.

“ A lady and two gentlemen, sir ; but the *young* gentleman is gone home.”

“ How did the young lady seem ? Pretty well ?”

“She looked but poorly, sir? but I haven’t a doubt the change of air will do her good.”

I went into my parlour, and heard Mr. Goldburg’s peculiar springing walk above my head. I was afraid of disturbing him too soon, by going upstairs to inquire after Miss Goldburg; so I waited and listened, feeling pretty sure, that he would not long bear the confinement of the small room he was pacing. And I was right.

“How do you do, Mr. Goldburg,” I said, interrupting him in the passage.

“What! Mr. Lookabout here?”

“I hope Miss Goldburg has not suffered much from her journey.”

“She does not complain; but I dare say she would rather have staid at home.”

“Will you come into my parlour, Mr. Goldburg?”

“I was going out for a stretch; but, however, I’ll come in. But do you lodge here, then?”

“Yes.”

“Some how or other, we are always stumbling on you, Mr. Lookabout.”

As he entered my room, he clapped his hands to his eyes. “Candles already, what a glare!”

“You came out of the dark, Mr. Goldburg,” I remarked, blowing one of the candles out. “Is her arm well?”

“It is going on well, but whether the doctor got the

needle out, or whether it worked out of itself, has never been made clear to me. However, it *is* out, and that's enough."

He stood erect on the rug and rubbed all the hair off his forehead, which made him look wilder than ever. It struck me that his face was even thinner than usual, and his temples were sunken; his eyes being cast down, I could look at him without fear of giving offence. I wanted to feel my way towards Miss Goldburg's revelation, but I really did not know how.

"Do you know, Mr. Lookabout," he exclaimed, looking up all of a sudden, "I want to get rid of that house in Rue Street. Can you tell me of anyone who would buy it, just as it is, furnished and all?"

"Yes, Mr. Goldburg, I think I can. It is your niece's property, isn't it?"

"Yes; it was my brother's, and he let it because his wife didn't like it. But it has been nothing but a loss to us, for of late years tenants would not have it, because it was shabby."

"And you don't like living in it yourself?"

"I can't afford it. I shall live altogether where I am employed as secretary, when my niece is married."

"And will that be soon?"

"I suppose so; there is no shaking off Thorn. By-

the-by, what in the world made *him* so forbearing towards Cecil Cote?"

"Did he know it was him, Mr. Goldburg?" I ventured to say.

"He says not; but then he won't say why he took himself off, instead of trying to discover the culprit, as every one expected him to do."

"He might retort upon you there, Mr. Goldburg. You seemed even more willing to let the matter drop."

"Well, so I was; but *I* had my reasons, and he could have had none."

"I waited a little bit to see if he would voluntarily communicate his reasons, and then asked,—"Did you suspect Mr. Cecil?"

"Me! How should I? I suppose Alice must be right; but why he should do it, and why she should speak to revive unpleasantness just now, is to me incomprehensible."

What could I say to this? I coughed to gain time for reflection, but Mr. Goldburg spared me a reply, by going on.

"It's a bad business—very bad. I never questioned Alice, because I had a suspicion—no, I won't say a suspicion, that's too strong; but I had a kind of a feeling that I should hear *old* Cote was the man."

"And you did not wish to prosecute him?"

“ No, no. If she had died, perhaps—but who could prosecute that man! And now the son—more trouble on the old man’s head.”

Mr. Goldburg turned his back to me, and looked down into the fire.

“ I dare say Miss Goldburg is sorry, for her god-father’s sake ; but really I should rejoice in Mr. Cecil’s disgrace.”

“ What makes you so savage on him ?” he asked, wheeling round on me again.

“ Because I think him a scoundrel.”

“ Very strong language to use against a man like Cecil. I have been a long time, though. Good night :” and so saying, Mr. Goldburg abruptly left my room, and I heard the house-door close after him.

I seized my hat, and followed him at a safe distance. He took the road to Cote Hall. I could scarcely see him, it was so dark ; but my footsteps made no noise, for the ground was soft and muddy. As we reached the avenue, I heard Mr. Goldburg exclaim in a subdued tone,—“ Is that you, Cecil ?”

Fearing he had found me out, I got over the hedge, but as I did so a voice replied,—“ Yes ; it is me. Well, Goldburg, and what do you say to it ?”

“ I want to speak to you, Cecil. Let us go to your house.”

“ No ; I am going into the town.”

“Then I must say a few words to you here. Go abroad, Cecil, that’s my advice.”

“Why should I leave my country, pray?”

“Come, Cecil, I ought to make a great fuss, and prosecute you; but again I say, go abroad this very night—this very hour.”

“That I certainly shall not.”

“You are not innocent, Cecil. Alice is not one to bring a false accusation.”

“Do I say it is false? But where is her witness?”

“Don’t rely on that, Cecil. She says you stood at a window. No one may have seen you but herself; still they will examine your father, and Heaven only knows what may come of it.”

They moved on a little way, and I did the same on the other side the hedge.

“I tell you, Goldburg, they shall *not* examine my father. They want no evidence if I don’t deny it.”

“But think of the disgrace.”

“Disgrace, nonsense. I did not mean to kill her.”

“Ah, I see, it was an accident. You mean to say that. Well, I have no doubt Alice will bear you out.”

“I do not want her leniency, whatever I may say or do. But to you, Goldburg, I may say that it was *not* accident; my purpose was to spoil her beauty.”

Mr. Cecil's short laugh, mingled with Mr. Goldburg's rejoinder.

"What in the world has Alice done to you? I used to think you liked her at one time."

"Don't pretend to be in the dark, Goldburg, when you know all about it."

"Upon my honour, Cecil, I don't. I have not the least idea why you should be so inimical to my niece."

"Yes, you may tell her I *detest* her, though I did not wish to kill her. No, there was but shot in my pistol; would it had made of her face what it has of her arm."

"Cecil! Hush. *Alice* is no flirt; she cannot have behaved ill to you."

"Ill? Oh no. This was it. My father looked out of that window in the morning. I stood by him, and he exclaimed, 'How like!' Alice it was he meant. You know *who* like. An hour after that she had rejected me."

"But, Cecil, you know she was engaged to another man."

"And if I did? She made my acquaintance before his, and showed no repugnance at that time, when I met you in Germany."

"Don't let us stand here any more, Cecil. Do turn back with me to your house. We

have always been friends, don't let us quarrel now."

Mr. Cecil Cote muttered something I could not make out, and they walked rapidly on together. I followed them as far as the hedge would allow, and then got over it into the avenue again. The sound of a closing door told me they had entered the house, and I went up to it for the purpose of examining the windows, but, alack! they were all closed and shuttered fast. I could not have thought Mr. Goldburg would have conducted himself so quietly, under such trying circumstances. When I got back to my temporary home, I was assailed by my landlady with offers of posset, and I know not what, to keep off another cold, which she looked upon as an imminent consequence of my evening wanderings.

About an hour after my return, I heard Mr. Goldburg come in and go upstairs. I have an idea that he sat up very late, though he was unwontedly quiet. Early in the morning Mr. Thorn came, and a short time after his arrival, I went up to inquire how Miss Goldburg was. Knocking at the drawing-room door, I was asked to come in by Mr. Goldburg, and I found him seated with Mr. Thorn.

"Good morning, Mr. Lookabout, take a chair."

"I hope Miss Goldburg is better?"

"Yes; she is pretty well, I think."

“Will she soon be down?” asked Mr. Thorn, looking at his watch.

“I dare say she will; it’s no use to hurry her.”

“No; but I hope she remembers that we must be at Mr. Crone’s house in less than an hour’s time.”

“It is not likely she would forget that. What a fine morning it is, Mr. Lookabout. Have you been out?”

“No, not yet.”

“You have not lost your cough yet. It seems worse than when I saw you last night.”

“Oh, no, not in the least; merely a tickling in the throat.”

“Here is Alice at last!” exclaimed Mr. Thorn, starting up.

She entered the room, looking very pale, but calm as usual.

“I thought you would have had your things on,” said Mr. Thorn.

“Well, and haven’t I my ‘things,’ as you call them, on,” answered she, looking down at herself.

- She had a black dress on; I think it was of silk.

“I mean your bonnet and shawl.”

“Why should I have those things on, to sit here?”

“Do you forget our appointment with Mr. Crone?”

“No; but we are not going yet.”

“To be sure not,” put in Mr. Goldburg. “There is plenty of time to muffle up.”

Mr. Thorn had placed a ricketty easy-chair near the window for her.

“I’d rather sit by the fire, Courtney.”

He placed it there, nearly overturning me as he did so, and I think this made her first notice that I was in the room, for she bowed as she seated herself. Mr. Thorn was not good-looking. I say this now, because it comes into my head to say it, and I don’t remember having said it before. My word may be taken, he was decidedly plain. What Miss Goldburg saw in him, I cannot imagine. He had a tolerable figure and a good carriage—that I grant, but then—well, I suppose she found him agreeable, though I should say few people did. I detached the key of her box from my watch-chain, and presented it to her.

“Why, this is my key? How did you find it?”

“Mrs. Ursula found it somewhere in the sofa.”

“So that was where you left your key, Alice.”

“It slipped down the crevice one day, uncle, and I thought I would take it out some time, but I forgot. I must have the box now.”

“Mr. Crone has it.”

“Mr. Crone?”

“Yes; he took it away from Cote Hall, and gave me the key, that you might not suspect him of ransacking it.”

“I never knew such a man as Mr. Crone,” said Mr. Goldburg; “he must even busy himself about other people’s boxes.”

“Now, Alice, there is but half-an-hour,” remonstrated Mr. Thorn.

“What a hurry you are in.”

“Yes; I long to have that villain punished.”

“Must I get ready, uncle?”

“Well, dear, just as you like; you don’t take long to dress.”

“You seem to have lost your love of punctuality this morning, Mr. Goldburg.”

Miss Goldburg gave a look at her lover, and said,—“Uncle knows best when to be punctual. I’ll go now if you like.”

She rose, and with great deliberation, left the room. Mr. Thorn, ruffled in temper, ran his fingers through his light locks and walked to the window. Mr. Goldburg looked thoughtful, and did not speak. I could see Mr. Thorn twitching out his watch every now and then. The clock in the passage below struck, and at the same instant Mr. Thorn exclaimed,—“Here is Mr. Crone, coming to look after us. You can’t say Alice is not long dressing this morning, Mr. Goldburg.”

Mr. Goldburg smiled, and Mr. Crone was shown in.

“ Well, Mr. Goldburg, I’m come to save you the trouble of coming to my house, for Cecil Cote has made off—forfeited his bail. I am convinced of his guilt now. He can never show his face here again.” -

“ Gone !” cried Mr. Thorn. “ I’ll be after him though ;” and as he spoke he bounded to the door.

“ Where are you going in such a hurry, Courtney ?”

Miss Goldburg said this, standing in the doorway with her bonnet and shawl on.

“ He is off, Alice, and I must be after him ; let me pass.”

“ If you go, Courtney, never come back.”

“ Why, do you want to favour the rascal ?”

“ I want you to let him alone, and if you will not do so, then as I said, never come back to me.”

Mr. Thorn flushed with anger ; she passed him and took her seat by the fire.

“ I don’t think it is of any use, Mr. Thorn,” said Mr. Crone. “ He went last night, and is across the Channel by this time, I dare say. You don’t seem much to care, Mr. Goldburg.”

“ Would you have me wring my hands and lament, Mr. Crone ?”

Mr. Crone was not in a humour for joking, but giv-

ing a wry smile, he said,—“I hope you may not have to do it some future day, Mr. Goldburg.”

“Mr. Crone, will you let me have my box, please?” said Miss Goldburg, looking round.

“Yes! of course. I’ll see that it is sent to you in the course of the day. And now, good morning to you.”

Mr. Thorn looked as if he had a mind to follow him; but, however, he did not.

“I shall go and take off my bonnet,” said Miss Goldburg, and went.

Mr. Thorn was black—in expression of face I mean. Mr. Goldburg, cheerful; and my spirits kept pace with his. Without a word, Mr. Thorn departed, and Mr. Goldburg, gently rubbing[?] the muff his niece had left behind her, said,—“Didn’t I think so? They have quarrelled again.”

Miss Goldburg being gone, I did not care to stay, for I knew she would not come back as long as I remained. I did not see her again, till just before they started for London, the next day.

“Mr. Lookabout,” she said, “how could you say Mr. Crone did not look into my box? He had the coolness to send me my father’s pistol in a separate parcel!”

“I can explain to you.”

“Never mind; but you see, uncle, I was not so nonsensical to keep my counsel about the key.”

To tell what a blank their departure made of my spirits, would be tedious, so I will merely say, that this my last journey, was taken to my own home, which though long deserted, I cannot say I had any *curiosity* to see.

THE END.

